













THE  
G O S P E L   H I S T O R Y  
OF  
OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR  
J E S U S   C H R I S T.

BY JULY BARTON.

WITH A PREFACE,  
BY BERNARD BARTON.

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"JESUS CHRIST THE SAME YESTERDAY, TO-DAY, AND FOR EVER."  
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**TO**

**MY DEAR COUSINS**

**S. E. E M. & R A.**

**THE COMPANIONS OF MY EARLY YOUTH**

**AND THE VALUED FRIENDS OF RIPER YEARS;**

**THIS LITTLE VOLUME IS INSCRIBED**

**BY THEIR AFFECTIONATE**

**L. B.**



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## P R E F A C E.

A FEW years since, the Author of this volume put forth one, under the title of "Bible Letters;" narrating, in an epistolary form, the more prominent incidents recorded in the Old Testament: the kind reception given to that little work has encouraged her so far to attempt the completion of her plan, as to aim at embodying, in a similar manner, such of the leading events given in the New Testament, as may be said to constitute a Biographical Narrative of the Gospel History, and to warrant, in some degree, the title assumed.

In the narrative part of the New Testament, left on record by the Evangelists, although the interest is even of a higher, purer, and far more touching nature than can be afforded by the events which constitute the history of the Old; it may not,

perhaps, at first appear to be one which so quickly and potently calls forth the sympathy, the wonder, the awe of childish feeling and thought. But when these shall have been judiciously trained, when the better feelings and the purer imaginings of a child's heart shall have been taught, even in degree, in what true beauty, loveliness, and dignity consist; there will be found by such an one, in the perfect pattern set by the Divine Redeemer, and in the artless and simple record of what he said, did, and suffered, to bring us to God, a charm far surpassing all the more splendid events, the narration of which forms the history of the Old Testament.

And, perhaps, the more we reflect on the subject, the more strongly shall we feel impressed with the importance of seeking to excite the interest, and enlist the sympathies of children, in and on behalf of the beautiful and touching narratives given by the Evangelists, of the Life and Labours of their Divine Master. That they will be

found to embody a portraiture of goodness the most transcendently lovely, of gentleness the most winning, of patience and forbearance the most perfect, of fortitude under suffering the most heroic, of humility the most dignified, and of love the most enduring that can be set forth, all who have ever contemplated it aright must admit. Can we, then, through too great a variety of means or forms, seek to draw the attention of a child to the *habitual*, the delightful study of a personification of virtue so truly Divine as that exhibited by HIM, who, in the sublime language of the beloved disciple, “was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

Nor can the habitual, the humble contemplation of such a portraiture fail, with the blessing of God, to be profitable to all. Whether they be, in the beautiful words of the same disciple, “little children” in Christ, “whose sins are forgiven for his

name's sake ;" or " young men who," through his grace, " have overcome the wicked one ;" or fathers, " who have known him that is from the beginning ;" to each, and to all, the theme is one fraught with its own peculiar appeal.

For, the more attentively we look into, and the more deeply we consider the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ ; the more we study the scope and tenor of his glorious Gospel, the more we imbibe its influence, and live in its spirit, the more we shall find in it, and in Him, of pure and all-pervading love. The wisdom taught in the Gospel is that which, alone, can make wise unto salvation, and which cometh from above ; " it is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits : " and the charity enjoined by the Apostle, and exalted by him even above faith and hope, bears the same traits of its heavenly origin ; — " it suffereth long, and is kind ; it envieth not, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself

unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth ; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

Now, if the inculcation of these divine attributes of our high and holy faith be of primary importance ; if they constitute the badges whereby Christ himself declared, "All men shall know ye are my disciples," can we too early, too frequently, or too earnestly turn the susceptible minds of children to their living exemplification in the Person of our adorable Redeemer ? to their practical illustration in HIS LIFE ? The Love whence they all emanate is the Alpha and Omega of his whole ministerial career. His Birth was announced to the Shepherds with the blissful anthem of "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and goodwill to men !" His whole Life was a series of benevolent deeds, of kind offices, of tender exhortations ; He bade the lame walk ; He healed the sick, gave sight to the blind ;

speech to the dumb; hearing to the deaf; life to the dead: He comforted the afflicted, compassionated the poor; fed the hungry: He bore with patience and meekness the scoffs, the jeers, the insults, the cruelties of those who despitefully entreated Him, and died with a prayer for His murderers.

Such was the Life, and such the Death of Christ: and beautiful, and touching as they are in themselves, from their exemplification of all that "is lovely, pure, and of good report;" they have a yet higher interest, a yet stronger appeal to us, as professing Christians, in *the fruits* which the scheme of CHRISTIAN REDEMPTION justly assigns to their efficacy; for, as certainly as *The Life* of our Blessed Lord was meant to be our highest and holiest ensample; so, assuredly, *His Sufferings and Death* remain *the sole propitiatory Sacrifice, and atonement for our sins*; and His glorious ascension the pledge, through a living and operative faith, of our reconciliation, and justification with God!

Would we, then, lay the foundations, well and wisely, deeply and surely, of a true and living faith, in the hearts of children, a faith that shall be known by its fruits, a faith that shall “work by Love, to the purifying of the heart;” let it be the highest pleasure, as it is the privilege and the duty of every Christian Parent and Teacher, to lead the minds of those whom they are training for Eternity, to the study and contemplation of **THE LIFE OF CHRIST!** “Suffer little Children to come unto me, and forbid them not!” were His own gracious words, on earth; they are, assuredly, still as applicable to the knowledge of His CHARACTER, as developed in Holy Writ, as ever they could be to an introduction to His personal presence; and the blessing then pronounced by His lips, on those so presented, is still vouchsafed by His Spirit to those who are thus early brought to Him!

To conclude; in so far as these humble pages may have the smallest tendency to



promote so happy and glorious a result, by inviting and encouraging their young readers to study for themselves the living oracles of divine truth, may the blessing of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ go with them, and rest upon them; further than they may be rendered capable of being subservient to this end, through the accompanying aid and teaching of the Holy Spirit, no ambitious feeling on the part of their Author, nor the yet stronger one of parental affection on that of the writer of this Preface, can, for one moment, wish their perpetuity.

BERNARD BARTON.

Woodbridge.



## LIFE OF CHRIST,

4c.

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### LETTER I.

DEAR CHILDREN,

THE first four books of the New Testament were written by four different persons who believed in Jesus, and they are called the *Gospels*. The meaning of the word *Gospel* is, "*glad tidings*." Suppose a parent were to call his children around him, and say to them, "Here is a lesson which I wish you to learn; it is quite easy, and I know you can learn it if you will; therefore, if you do not repeat it to me quite perfectly, I shall punish you by sending you from me, and my house: I should be very sorry to do this, but, if you do not obey me, it must be done." Though their parent

had told them, what to expect, suppose these children were idle and careless, and when they came to say their lesson made many mistakes, thinking, perhaps, their father did not mean what he said; but when they found he was very much displeased with them, and would send them away, because they had been so naughty, you may fancy they would wish very much they had done better; and I should hope they would feel very sorry that they had disobeyed their good father, who had always been kind to them, and given them all things that they had. Now, suppose that, while they were feeling quite unhappy at what was to befall them, some kind friend were to come in and say, If you are really sorry for what you have done, and will mind what I say to you, and try to be good from this time, I will bear your punishment for you, and ask your father to forgive you;—do you not think these poor children would love this friend very much, and that it would be “glad tidings” to them, to hear that they were not to be sent away from their father’s house; and that, for the sake of this kind friend, he had forgiven them, and taken them again into his favour. Thus, dear children, it is indeed “glad tidings” to the Christian child, to be told

from the New Testament that we have a Friend in heaven, who came down on earth and died, that we might live for ever with our Father in heaven. You will, I think, wish in your hearts that this Friend, who is the Son of God, would lead you to God the Father, who loves us, if we love and believe in Him through Jesus Christ our Lord. When our Lord went up into heaven, he promised his Holy Spirit to guide those who wish to walk in his ways. This good Spirit he will give to all that ask him. We should therefore pray to God, that he would be pleased to give it to us, that we may be able to do our best to follow the example of our blessed *Redeemer*, who was meek and lowly, and full of love to all mankind.

You will often find our Lord Jesus Christ spoken of as our *Redeemer*, in the Bible. Perhaps you may not exactly know the meaning of the word. You have all heard of a Negro slave; you know that he is the property of his master; that he cannot go any where, or do any thing, without his leave, because he is not his own, but belongs to his master. Suppose some kind friend were to pity him very much, and wish to set him free; he would have to buy him of his master before he could do any thing for

him; before he could redeem him from bondage, that is, before he could take him out of a state of slavery, and make him free. The money which this kind friend would pay for him would be his redemption money. After this had been paid, we should say that he was redeemed or set free. Now, we are all the servants or slaves of sin, and are as little able to set ourselves free as the poor slave would be. We cannot redeem ourselves; but Jesus Christ has given himself for us, that we should be no longer the servants of sin. He has himself become *our Redeemer*! Thus we are not redeemed with silver or gold, but with the far more precious blood of Christ, who has given himself to be a Ransom or a Redeemer for us all. Would not the Negro slave love the kind friend who had redeemed him from bondage? Would he not gladly serve him, and do all he could to shew his gratitude? And would he ever expect to be praised or rewarded for his grateful conduct? Oh! no; he would think all he could do far too little to shew his love towards one who had done so much for him. Thus should we love and serve *our REDEEMER*!

It had been prophesied by Isaiah, that the mother of our Lord should be a pure and holy

virgin; and we find the birth of Jesus Christ thus spoken of in the gospels: "The angel Gabriel was sent from God unto the city of Nazareth, to a virgin of the house of David, whose name was Mary." After he had greeted her as most blessed among women, he said, "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favour with God. And behold thou shalt bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

Mary was at this time about to become the wife of a man named Joseph, to whom God made all these things known in a dream; and he, being a just man, who believed the word of the Lord, feared not to take her home to his house. And we find that Jesus Christ was born at Bethlehem of Judea, when Mary was there, with Joseph her husband, who went to be taxed. That you may know what this means, I must tell you, that the Jews were not at this time masters of their own country: In order to punish them for their many sins, the Lord had

permitted the Romans to conquer them, and Augustus Cæsar, emperor of Rome, at this time ruled over them. Every Jew had to go to his own city, and there enter his name in some public papers kept for that purpose, and own himself subject to the Romans by paying tribute to them, which was the cause of Joseph's journey to Bethlehem at this time.

Thus the Saviour of the world did not come as many of the Jews expected; for they thought he would appear as a mighty prince, who was to free them from the power of the Romans. But he first shewed himself among those who were humble and lowly in life, for, instead of coming into the world to enjoy its comforts, he had not often where to lay his head. Indeed, his first bed on earth was in a manger, for the inn where he was born was so full at the time, that his mother could not get a better place to put herself and her child in than a stable, and we read in the New Testament, that she wrapped him in some clothes, and "laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn."

Yours affectionately.

## LETTER II.

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THUS, although Nazareth was the dwelling-place of Mary, by the over-ruling providence of God, Bethlehem became the birth-place of the holy child, for it had been prophesied many years before by the prophet Micah, that from Bethlehem, though a small town among the thousands of Judah, should come the Saviour, he who was to be Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old—from everlasting.

At that time was born the holy child spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, when he says, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, of whose government and peace there shall be no end." That Saviour, who is called in the Bible the Wisdom of God, who was with God from the beginning or ever the earth was, who says, "When he prepared the heavens, I was there



when he established the 'clouds above'; when he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth: then was I by Him, as one brought up with him; and I was daily 'his delight, rejoicing always before him. Now, therefore, hearken unto me, O ye children; for blessed are they that keep my ways." That Saviour, who, when the fullness of time was come, was sent by God, that, through death, he might destroy him who brought into the world sin and death. That Saviour, who, though he came from heaven as a light to the Gentiles, to open the eyes of the blind, to give 'everlasting life' unto all who should believe in him, yet was meek and gentle; for, though he had power to punish all who rebelled against him, yet, when he was reviled, reviled not again, and prayed for his enemies, saying, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do!" This Saviour, Jesus Christ, came into the world as a little child, and was laid by Mary his mother in a manger.

As it was among the Jews that the coming of the Saviour had been foretold, and by *them* that he was looked for, you will suppose that, when his birth was known, they would have felt

great joy; and all, even those who were the farthest off, would wish to see him who was to do for them such great things. But the case was very different; they looked for one who should come with great earthly power and pomp. They could not believe that he who came among them so simply could be the prince "foretold by prophet, and by poet sung." They forgot that he was to be the Prince of Peace; and they could not believe that his kingdom was not of this world. There were, however, a few whose hearts were humble, and to whom God was pleased to make known that the babe, so little thought of by most around him, was he who should be the Saviour of the Jews; and not of them alone, but of all the nations of the earth who should own him for their God. For "there were in the same country shepherds in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night. And the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." And in order that

they might be sure that it was indeed the angel of the Lord that had appeared unto them, and declared this joyful truth, they were told that they should find the babe lying in a manger. "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will toward men." When the angels were gone from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us." They went, and found the infant Jesus as the angel had said, and they made known the saying which had been told them about the child; "and all they that heard it wondered;" but we read that Mary his mother kept all these things, and thought about them in her heart. The shepherds then went back to their flocks, praising God for all that they had heard and seen.

It was a custom among the Jews, according to the law of Moses, to set apart some of their children to serve the Lord; you may remember that Samuel was taken by his mother when very young to the temple for this purpose. When Jesus Christ was about six weeks old, he was

taken by *his* mother to the temple at Jerusalem, where she not only made an offering to the Lord of a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons, but she gave her child himself to God; for we find in Holy Scripture that she brought him to Jerusalem, "to present him to the Lord." She felt that he did not belong to her, and that she must soon give him up to do that great work for mankind, for which he had come down from heaven.

There was a man named Simeon lying in Jerusalem, who was a just and good man; for we read in the New Testament that "the Holy Ghost was upon him." This means, that the Spirit of God was in him, leading him to do justly the will of God. Now, the Lord by his good Spirit made this just man believe that he should not die until "he had seen the Lord's Christ." On the very day that the holy child was brought into the temple, Simeon came there; and the Lord made it known unto him, that this was indeed He for whom he had long watched. "Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all

people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." There came in also at the same time one Anna, a prophetess, who served God night and day; and she that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all who looked for him in Jerusalem. And when all things, according to God's will concerning the child, had been done, Joseph took Jesus and his mother back again into Galilee, to their own city of Nazareth.

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## LETTER III.

Thus the infant Jesus had been twice owned before the people as the Saviour of the world; once by the shepherds, and again in the temple by Simeon and Anna. But we find that other people besides Jews were looking for some great person to appear about this time. There were men living in Persia and Arabia, who were called magi. These were wise men, who lived together and studied much. Among other things, they gave much of their time to astronomy, which means the study of the stars.

Perhaps you may remember that, when the children of Israel were going up out of Egypt to the land of Canaan, they rested in the plains of Moab, and the king of Moab sent for Balaam to curse them; but Balaam said, "How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed?" and he blessed them three times. After he had done this, God caused him to foretell the coming of the Saviour, and he said, "There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel." Now Balaam is said to have come

out of the country where these magi or wise men lived. They would therefore be very likely to hear of this prophecy: and it was probably known among them from the time that it was spoken by Balaam even to the birth of Jesus Christ. Many people appear to have been looking about this time for a king to arise out of Judea, that should rule over all the world. When, therefore, these wise men saw in the heavens what appeared to them to be a star, which they had not before seen, hanging over Judea, they set out to see what it should mean; taking with them gifts, after the manner of their country, to present to the expected king. Accordingly, we read in the New Testament, that, after the birth of Jesus, "in the days of Herod the king, behold there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is He that is born king of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him." Now Herod the Great, who was king at that time, was a very cruel, selfish man, and when he heard that there had been a child born in Judea, who was called by these men king of the Jews, he became very restless and uneasy; we may suppose, for fear this king spoken of by the people should become a rival

to himself, and we read that "he was troubled." Herod then brought together all the chief priests and scribes, (the latter were persons who explained holy writ to the people,) and asked them to tell him where Christ should be born. "And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea; for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah art not the least among the princes of Judah; for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel."

\* When Herod heard this, and found that a child had indeed been born at Bethlehem, at whose coming into the world many miracles had been wrought, his evil nature rose within him. Perhaps he might feel that he was hated by the people for his cruelties, and feared that, if this child grew up, he might soon be liked better than himself, and the people be led to forsake him, and own Jesus for their king. This was enough to make so cruel a man hate even an innocent child, and he wickedly made up his mind to kill Christ. Herod little knew that he of whom he thought thus hardly was one whose kingdom was on high, and whose power could in a moment have taken from him all that he had, and even life itself; for although the Lord



of heaven appeared then but as a little helpless child, he still reigned above in the person of the Father of us all, in whose hands we all are, and whose mercy it is that gives us life, and health, and every blessing we enjoy from day to day. When Herod had heard what the scribes had to say, he sent privately for the wise men, and, having asked them how long it was since they had first seen the star, sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go, and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also." Herod sent these men, that they might find out where Jesus was, not indeed that he might come and worship him, but that he might have him put to death. Thus it is when we are tempted to do a wicked action; we are led to tell untruths, and to deceive, in order that we may hide our wickedness. When the men heard the king, they departed; "and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them," till it rested over the house where the young child was. "And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child, with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him." They then spread out their treasures, and gave gifts unto him of the pro-

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duce of their country—gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Thus you see these wise men left their country to bow before one, whom they expected to find born a king; yet, when they came to the humble dwelling of the heavenly child, and saw the poverty of his mother, they still believed that it was to him they were to present their gifts. After they had seen him whom they came to worship, they were told of God in a dream, that they should not return to Herod. They therefore went into their own country another way. When Herod found the wise men did not come back and tell him where he might find Jesus, he was very angry, and, in order that he might be sure of his death, he was wicked enough to have all the children in Bethlehem who were two years old, or younger, put to death, thinking that Jesus would surely be killed with the rest. But the holy child was by that time out of the reach of this wicked command; for after the wise men had left Judea, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, “Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word, for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.” Joseph did as he was commanded, took

the young child and his mother by night, and went into Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. Thus the Almighty made a way of escape from the cruelty of Herod: and we may learn from this never to fear any danger that may seem to be near us, *if we have God for our friend*: even death we need not fear, because we shall but go to our *Father in heaven*, and leave an earthly home for an heavenly one.

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## LETTER IV.

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WHEN Herod was dead, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel, for they are dead which sought the young child's life. Joseph did so; but when he found that the son of Herod did reign in Judea, he was afraid to go there, and, being told of God in a dream to go into Galilee, he came and dwelt in Nazareth, which was a city of Galilee, where the child grew strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him. This city was meanly thought of by the Jews, and yet we see the good purpose of the Most High in making it the dwelling-place of the Messiah, whilst he was a child. The prophets and holy men of old were enabled by the Spirit of God, not only to foretell that our Lord would for our sakes come into the world and die for our sins, but they were also taught to prophesy of the manner of his coming, and to tell of many things that should befall him here. And, had

not the Jews been so fully persuaded that the coming of Jesus would be with pomp and power as a king, to conquer their enemies, they could not have forgotten that the prophet had declared he should be a "man of sorrows," and be despised and rejected by those whom he died to save. The people of Nazareth were despised even by their fellow-countrymen; and afterwards, when they found that he who performed so many miracles came from that despised city, they said, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Thus did their unbelief fulfil the words of the prophet, and the Prince of Peace "was despised and rejected of men."

We next meet with our blessed Saviour going with Mary his mother and Joseph to the feast of the Passover at Jerusalem, when he was twelve years old. Joseph and Mary appear to have been in the habit of going every year to this feast, and although they lived at a good distance from Jerusalem, yet they did not neglect this duty. The number of those who went must have been very great, as all the men among the Jews were expected to come to Jerusalem at these times. At twelve years of age their children began to learn some trade. It was most likely at the same age that they

brought them forward in other things, and perhaps then took them for the first time to the temple. Their plan on these occasions was to travel together in company, for the way was long to some who lived at a great distance, and the roads were not free from robbers; therefore it was safer for many families to join together, carrying with them food, or whatever else they might want for their use by day, and tents for a lodging by night. Such to this day is the manner of travelling among many people in the East, and a company of this kind is called a *caravan*.

After the feast was over at Jerusalem, Mary and her husband set out with their friends to return home. They went a day's journey, and seeing nothing of Jesus, thought that he was with some of their friends in the company. But when the night came, and he did not come to their tent to sleep, "they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance; and when they found him not, they turned back to Jerusalem, seeking him." "After three days, they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, (who were men wise in the law,) hearing them, and asking them questions. And all they that heard him were astonished at his

answers." Here then was a proof of his wisdom, for at the age when the Jews began to teach their children the law, Jesus shewed by the answers which he gave in the temple, and the questions which he asked, that he needed not to be taught. When Mary said unto him, "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." Jesus said, "How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my FATHER'S business?" and they knew not what he meant. He then went with them to Nazareth, where "*he was subject unto them*;" but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart; "and Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." Here is one thing, dear children, which I would point out to you, that *Jesus was subject unto his parents*; for although he was not the son of Joseph, yet many among the Jews, who would not believe that he was Christ from heaven, said, "Is not this the son of Joseph the carpenter?" And I wish you to observe, that he who was God, as well as man, thought it his duty to love, honour, and obey those whom the world looked upon as his parents. This should indeed teach all children to be humble and obedient. One use of reading the

Testament is, that we may endeavour, as far as we can, to follow the example of him who was a pattern for us in all things, and who, in the early part of his earthly life, teaches us this lesson of respect and obedience to our parents. Should any of you, dear children, be apt to think highly of your own opinion, and not feel willing to give up to those who have the best right to command you, think of Jesus Christ, who, though he was equal with God, yet thought it not beneath him to shew by his great example that it is a good and blessed thing to honour our father and mother.

It had been foretold in the Old Testament, that a messenger should come before the Saviour, to prepare the way of the Lord, who should turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers: and thus, by calling upon all to repent of their sins, bring them to be of one mind in looking for that Saviour, who should take away the sins of the whole world. Accordingly, we find, before the birth of Jesus Christ, there was born in the country a child who was named John, afterwards called the Baptist, at whose birth miracles were wrought. At that time the heart of Zacharias his father was filled with the



Holy Ghost, and he prophesied, saying, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people." "And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest, for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord, to prepare his ways."

We find that, about thirty years after this time, came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness, and saying, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." And not only did this holy man teach the people to deny themselves, but he set them the example in his own conduct, which was humble and simple, for his days were spent in doing the will of the Most High, in preaching to the great multitudes who passed through the wilderness from one city to another. His lodging was in the desert, his food was locusts and wild honey. Thus he took no thought for the morrow, living from day to day on such food as might be found in these deserts, and his dress was a coarse garment of camel's hair." Many people came to him, and were baptized in the river Jordan, confessing their sins; to whom he spoke of the Saviour that should come, saying, "I indeed baptize you with water, but there cometh one after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not

worthy to unloose; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." But we find that the Saviour himself came to be baptized by John before he began to preach the gospel to the people.

We have before seen Jesus humble himself, as a little child, to his earthly mother: we find that he lived thirty years in this world, bearing his daily trials, and looked upon by most around him as a man like themselves, before he came forward in his high and holy office. But the time was now come when he should be made known to mankind as the Saviour of the world. "And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee unto John, to be baptized of him." John knew that he who now stood before him was the Saviour of whom he had spoken to the people, and he said, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" But he, who had not thought it beneath him to be obedient as a child, condescended to come, and be baptized at the preaching of his messenger. "And Jesus answering, said unto him, Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." Here again was shewn the humility of Christ; he not merely took upon himself the body of a man, in which he was subject to all

our pains and trials, but he, who was without sin, was for our sakes graciously pleased to fulfil the law which was laid down for sinful man. And Jesus, when he was baptized, came up out of the water, and as he was praying, the heaven opened, and the Spirit of God descended upon him like a dove, and, lo! there came a voice from heaven, saying, "Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased." Thus was thrown open the way of access to the Father, which had been closed by man, whose sins had separated between him and his God. He who then trod the weary path of life for our sakes, and after a painful pilgrimage bore the punishment of our sins upon the cross, now sits at the right hand of God, where he is still the "Beloved Son," for whose sake God will pardon all who come unto him.

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## LETTER V.

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AFTER Jesus had been baptized by John, he returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, where he stayed forty days and nights without any food. Then did Satan, who had tempted our first parents to eat of the forbidden fruit, come to Jesus when he was hungry, and say unto him, "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made into bread;" but Jesus said, "It is written, man shall not live by bread alone." Although he was "an hungered," yet he knew it was much better to suffer any thing than to give way to temptation, and do what he knew to be wrong for the sake of his own comfort. The same power that had enabled him to live forty days without food, could have kept him as long again, had it been needful. Thus, dear children, never be tempted to do what you know to be wrong, even to obtain any thing you may need; for you may always be sure that you are under the care of a kind Father, who will supply all you really want. When Satan found that it was in

vain to tempt Jesus to satisfy his hunger by yielding to what he well knew was a temptation of the evil one, he took him up into the holy city, and set him on a high part of the temple, and said unto him, "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down; for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." Jesus knew that this temptation to expose himself to needless danger must be from Satan; and he said unto him, "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." We are, without doubt, kept every day from many dangers unseen by us, but which are known to Him in whose hands we are, who both can and will preserve us, if he sees fit, from any dangers which may lie in the path of our duty. But if we put ourselves in the way of harm when there is no occasion to do so, we cannot hope for His protection whose eye is over us all, who knoweth every thought of our hearts, and the reason why we wish to act as we do.

Then the devil taketh Jesus up into a very high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, in a moment of time, and saith unto him, "All these things

will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." Then saith Jesus unto him, "Get thee hence, Satan, for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." To a proud, worldly-minded man, this last offer of the enemy of our souls, the offer of all the glory of the kingdoms of the world, might have been pleasing enough almost to have led him to forget the only true God; but He, whose kingdom was in heaven—He, who was God as well as man, who, for our sakes was thus tempted, and did suffer many things—had left behind him a far more glorious country than any earthly one which the tempter could shew Him. "Then the devil leaveth him, and behold angels came and ministered unto him."

We may here learn from this example of our blessed Saviour, that nothing should lead us from the service of our Maker. Neither the weakness and frailty of our bodies, nor the many temptations which may beset our hearts, nor the love of worldly pleasures, should lead us from walking in the simple path of duty. It is no sin to feel tempted to do wrong, for we have seen that even Christ was tempted: but the sin lies in giving way to the temptation. Thus, dear children, if at any time you are tempted to be

idle and neglect your duty, resolve at once to do your best to shake off the feeling, and rouse yourselves to industry. If you ever feel inclined to hide any fault by not telling the truth, or in any other way to deceive your friends, recollect that it is Satan who thus tempts you. Remember that God sees your heart; and will, if you ask him, enable you to overcome the evil: "for greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world."

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## LETTER VI.

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AFTER this time, John again saw Jesus, and said before the people, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." Two of the disciples or followers of John, when they heard him say this, went after Jesus. We read about this time of several persons who had been looking for the Saviour, coming to him, and owning him to be the Christ. While Jesus was upon the earth he performed many miracles, which must have called forth the wonder and attention of all who beheld them, even of those who refused to believe in his divine nature; and at the time have given reason for all who looked upon him as their Saviour, to place still greater faith in him who could do such mighty works. The first of these miracles which took place in public was at Cana in Galilee, where there was a marriage. "The mother of Jesus was there: and both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage." Our Lord was pleased to bless this feast by his presence, which may shew us that he takes delight in the innocent



happiness of his children. On this occasion he condescended to add to their joys; at the same time shewing his own power and glory. During the feast, they wanted more wine. When Mary saw this, she said unto Jesus, "they have no wine." Doubtless she felt that he had the power of supplying their wants. But Jesus saith unto her, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come." He was no longer the meek, gentle child, *subject* unto his earthly parents; he had to shew forth the power and mercy of God in his own person, to do his own will, and the will of our Father who is in heaven. Therefore Jesus gave this gentle reproof to one whom he had always honoured, whom he still loved. The expression, "What have I to do with thee?" was a common rebuke, used to any person who interfered in the affairs of another; and it was as if he had said to her, Thou dost not know what will be best, leave it to me, and I will choose the right time. Mary then said unto the servants, "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it."

It was the custom among the guests to wash their hands before they took their meal; and this practice remains among the Jews to this day. For this purpose there were set six water-

pots of stone, which held two or three firkins apiece; the Syrian firkin held somewhat more than seven pints of our measure. Then said Jesus, "Fill the water-pots with water." And they filled them up to the brim. And he saith unto them, "Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast." It was common for the person called governor, on these occasions, to bless the cup before he sent it round to the company. That which was water, when put into the vessels by the servants, now became good wine by the blessing and will of the Saviour. When the governor, not knowing what Jesus had done, tasted the cup brought to him from this miraculous supply, he sent for the bridegroom, and said unto him, "Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse; but thou hast kept the good wine until now." This man did not know from whence came the wine he so much praised. Although he owned it was very good, yet it seemed to him part of the usual supply. Thus it is with ourselves: we look upon the many blessings which we daily receive as things of course, which we have a right to expect. We do not remember that all comes from God; that it is his wisdom and love that

gives us our daily bread; that has placed us in that station of life for which we are best fitted. The very air we breathe is full of his mercy, for we could not live without it. He gave to the little fishes the power of swimming in the sea, and fitted them to live under the beautiful water, where man could not exist. He made the little feathered songsters of the grove, so that they balance themselves in the air, and fly from one part of the earth to another. In short, all that is, he made; and the more you use the powers which he has given you in studying his works, the more you will see of the power and might of Him who made the earth and all that is therein, the sun, the moon, and all the stars, many of which are supposed to be worlds like the one in which we live.

“This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and shewed forth his glory, and his disciples believed on him.” Those who had left John to follow Christ, saw and believed that he was that Messiah of whom John had preached to the people.

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## LETTER VII.

THE Jews' Passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. You may remember that it was at the feast of the Passover that he was found in the temple by Joseph and Mary, disputing with the doctors, when he was only twelve years old. Here then we find him again in the temple, which should have been set apart for the worship of God; but in which he found people buying and selling, and carrying on their different trades, selling oxen, sheep, and doves, and changing money; at which he was grieved and angry. "And when he had made a scourge, or whip, of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables, and said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise." When the Jews saw this, they wished to know what sign Jesus could give them of his authority and right to do these things. He said unto them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

He did not mean the temple of wood and stone in which they were standing, but he spoke of his own body, which was the temple in which his divine nature dwelt while he was upon the earth. You will recollect this came truly to pass, for I have elsewhere told you that after Jesus was crucified, and his body had lain in the grave three days, he again rose from the dead, and shewed himself to his disciples; and they remembered this saying after Jesus was risen, and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had said. But the Jews did not understand him. They thought he spoke of their temple, which was a large and noble building, and had taken many years to build; and they said, "Forty-six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?" While Jesus was at Jerusalem, many believed in his name when they saw the miracles which he did, "but Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men." He knew whom he could trust as his true disciples, for he knows the heart of man, and needed not that any should tell him who believed, and who did not, for "He knew what was in man." Yes, dear children, God knows every secret thought and wish of our hearts. When we pray to him, he knows whether we

are really giving up to him our hearts, or whether only our lips address him. When we say, "Our Father, which art in heaven," he knows whether we are looking to him for his mercy and protection, as a child would look to its parent for love and kindness, or whether we merely repeat the words at certain times as a matter of course. Let us remember, that our hearts are, each one of them, a temple, into which the Almighty God has put a soul that never dies. If we suffer this temple to be filled with vain thoughts, with pride, with selfishness, or any other feeling that is contrary to the meekness and purity of the Gospel of Christ, God will not dwell in us. We must pray that the Spirit of Christ may cleanse the temple of our hearts from every evil thought. We shall then hear the still, small voice of Him who hath said, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." Let us then open our hearts to Him who will lead us to eternal life.

You will find in a map of the places spoken of in the New Testament, a part of the country, lying between Judea and Galilee, called Samaria. The people living there were known by the name of Samaritans. These people and the Jews thought so very differently about some matters,

that the Jews were forbidden by their rulers to receive any kindness from the Samaritans; they were not allowed to ask even for a draught of water or a bit of bread in passing through their country. Jesus, when he left Judea to go into Galilee, must needs pass through Samaria; and when he came near to the city of Sychar, being tired with his journeying, he sat down by a well which he found there, while his disciples went to the city to buy food. For it appears to have been lawful for the Jews to *buy* any thing they needed of the Samaritans, though they might not receive any thing from them as a gift. They were, however, to learn that Jesus Christ came into the world to do away with many differences; for we are all one in Christ Jesus. It is his will that we should love our neighbour as ourselves: and he has said, "Behold, a new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another." Whilst he was sitting by the well, there came a woman of Samaria to draw water, "and Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink." The woman, surprised at such a request from one whom she thought was a Jew, said, "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, who am a woman of Samaria?" Jesus said unto her, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and

who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water:" meaning by this, that had she known it was the Saviour of men who had condescended to ask her for water to drink, she would have asked him for his grace, which Jesus here compares to living water, and which refreshes the well-disposed soul far more than the freshest water can cheer the tired and thirsty body. But the woman did not yet know what he meant; and asked him how he could get this water, seeing that he had nothing to draw it with, and the well was deep. Jesus then said, "Whosoever drinketh of this water, shall thirst again; but whosoever shall drink of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst: but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up unto everlasting life." The woman saith unto him, "Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw." She then thought that Jesus was a prophet, because he told her of many of the actions of her past life; and she asked him at which place it was lawful to worship God, whether at Jerusalem or in their own mountain: for this was one of the things upon which they did not agree with the Jews. "Jesus



saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet in Jerusalem, worship the Father." For those who worship God aright may raise their hearts to him at all times and in all places: for God is a spirit; he is therefore every where; and all those who give up their whole hearts to serve the Lord, by obeying the commands of the Gospel, "worship him in spirit and in truth." The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things." "Jesus saith unto her, ~~I that speaketh unto thee am he.~~ This then was the first time that Jesus Christ had declared himself to be the Saviour. Doubtless He who knows the spirit that is in our hearts, knew that this woman would believe on him, and that her example might bring others to learn of him. Just then his disciples came back from the city, where you know they went to buy food; and they were surprised to find our Lord talking with a woman who was a Samaritan. The woman then left her water-pot, went her way into the city, and said to the people, "Come see a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master eat; but he said, "I have

meat to eat, that ye know not of... My meat is to do the will of him that sent me." Then came many people from the city to Jesus, who believed on him because of the saying of the woman; and asked him to stay with them awhile; and he abode there two days, in which time many more, who now heard him for themselves, believed that he was indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

## LETTER VIII.

WHEN JESUS had stayed two days with the people of Samaria, he left their city, and went again into Galilee, to the same place where he had turned the water into wine. And there was a certain nobleman whose son was sick, at Capernaum, who, when he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee, went unto him, and besought him that he would *come down* and heal his son, for he was at the point of death." People, who have been in the country where these events took place, tell us that the distance between these two places was about twenty-three miles; and Dr. E. D. Clarke says that the whole way from Cana to the place now called Capernaum, is a descent. Thus, dear children, these little words about the country, and others like them, which may be found in the Scriptures, lead us to admire the accuracy of the writers of these divine books. We are not merely told that this distressed father whose son was sick, asked Jesus to come to Capernaum and cure him, but that he besought him to *come down* to Capernaum; thus telling us the kind of road by which

he must travel. And do you not think, dear children, that those persons who now travel through the country still famous as the scene of these mighty events, must feel their belief stronger in that blessed book, whose writers were taught of God, when they find such great truth even in little things?

The afflicted father was pleading for the life of his son to one who is ever merciful; and we find that Jesus Christ thought fit to restore this young man, and thus cause the heart of his father to believe in him whose power and love could do such great things. But it was not needful that He who was the power of God, and is every where, should leave the place where he then was, before this cure could be wrought. He did not go down to Capernaum, but said unto the man, who, it seems, was a person of high rank, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." The nobleman saith unto him, "Sir, come down ere my child die." Jesus saith unto him, "Go thy way, thy son liveth." And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way." Doubtless his heart was light within him, and full of love to God for all his goodness. We are too apt to forget God in

our hours of joy; and when we feel the full delights of health and strength, we do not enough remember Him "from whom all blessings flow." The joyful father gave, however, the best proof that he knew from whence his happiness came: for upon his return home, when met by his servants, who told him that his son lived, and when he found that the fever had left him at the same hour in which Jesus had said to him, "Thy son liveth," we read that *he believed*, and his whole house." This is the second miracle that Jesus did when he was come out of Judea into Galilee.

After this, Jesus went into Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and as his custom was, he entered the synagogue on the sabbath-day, and stood up to read. It was usual when any great person went into the synagogue, to ask him to read a part of the Scriptures, and then explain it. This was the first time that Jesus came forward as a public preacher among the Jews. The book was put into his hand; he opened it, and read from the prophet Isaiah the following text, in which he himself is spoken of: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor: he hath sent me to heal the

broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." He then closed the book, gave it again to the minister, and sat down; and the eyes of all were fixed upon him. Then said Jesus, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." All the people seemed to wonder at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth, and they said, "Is not this Joseph's son?" Here, in the very country where Jesus had led his pure and holy life, where they must have known the miracles that attended his birth, and heard of those things which he had done at Cana of Galilee, they refused to believe that he was the Christ; and their anger was so stirred up at certain words that he preached to them on this occasion, that they "rose up and thrust him out of their city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. But he, passing through the midst of them, went his way unhurt, and came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days, and they were astonished at his doctrine; for his word was with power.

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## LETTER IX.

ONE day when Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers fishing. The name of one was Simon, who is also called Peter, and Andrew his brother. And as they were casting their nets into the sea, he said unto them, "Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men;" and immediately they forsook their nets, and followed him. Thus you see our Saviour did not choose those men who were to follow him, and be the first teachers of the Gospel, from the learned, the powerful, or the noble: for then the enemies of Christ would have said that the pure religion of Jesus was set up by human power and wisdom. No: he chose from the poor, the unlearned, the simple-minded of the earth; persons who were content to give up their whole time to attend him wherever he went, that they might behold his power and love; and being thus ever with him, seeing his good works, gentle spirit, and very often his might and majesty, their hearts became filled with his spirit, and they were able to preach to

the people Jesus Christ, who for our sakes was crucified. He who had all things under his power and rule did not need to employ any earthly means to bring his will to pass; and we now see that the religion which was at first believed in only by a few poor fishermen, has spread over great part of the world: and we are told in Holy Writ, that it will spread until all shall know the name of Jesus.

When Jesus had gone a little farther hence, "he saw James, the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship, mending their nets." These men he also called, to follow him; "and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him." And it came to pass, that as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret, and saw two ships standing by the lake, but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets." One of these ships belonged to Simon, into which Jesus went, and prayed him that it might be thrust out a little way from the land. He then sat down, and taught the people out of the ship. Jesus then told Simon to launch out into the deep, that they might catch some fish; but Simon said, "Master, we have toiled all the



night, and have taken nothing; but he added, "at thy word I will let down the net." When they had done this, and were about to draw it up again out of the water, they found it so heavy with the number of fish they had taken, that the net was beginning to break, and they were obliged to call to their friends in the other ship to come and help them; and they came and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink." Then did a feeling of great fear and awe come upon Simon Peter. He felt the power of Him who could thus command all creatures at his will: he knew that he himself was not worthy of the least of all his mercies, and he fell down at the feet of Jesus, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord:" for he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken; and so were also James and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon." And Jesus said unto Simon, "Fear not: from henceforth thou shalt catch men." And when they had brought the ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him. They went into Capernaum, and on the Sabbath Jesus entered into the synagogue and taught, "and the people were astonished at his doctrine, for he

taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes."

Here we see the Son of God, the pure and holy Jesus, commanding an evil spirit: for He who thus went about doing good, had power not only over the things of this world, but he had power in heaven and in hell. He had power over the angels that surround the throne of the Majesty on high, and over all evil spirits who have fallen from a state of happiness into one of endless misery. In the synagogue, Jesus met with a man who had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Let us alone: what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God." Here then was another proof of the power of Christ: for when he had said unto the evil spirit, "Hold thy peace, and come out of him, the devil threw the man in the midst, came out of him, and hurt him not." Then were the people amazed at his power, and said among themselves, "What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out." I will tell you, dear children, what word it was: it was the word of Jesus, at whose name every knee shall

bow, and every tongue shall confess that he is God, who not only had power over the unclean spirits, (which we read were in those days permitted thus to trouble man, perhaps in order that his power might be seen, who commandeth the evil spirits, and they obey him;) but he has power, to help us also, to cleanse our hearts from every unclean and evil thought, to set us free from the power of Satan, who will strive to rule us, and lead us, and ruin us, if we ask not the blessing of that Jesus, at whose name the devils tremble.

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## LETTER X.

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My letters would be very many if I were to give you a full account of all the deeds of mercy which were done by the Saviour for the good and comfort of those who were sick and afflicted. It is my earnest wish that the little I may be able to tell you about them may lead you to read for yourselves that blessed book, which so much concerns us all; which, if read with a humble heart, will lead us to feel love and gratitude for Him who is a spirit, but who, as God the Father, is holy and just, and must punish sin: as God the Son, we shall there find that he left his throne on high, to come down and be a man, that he might die for our sins, that all who believe in him and strive to walk in his ways should have their sins forgiven, for the sake of the blood of Christ, which was shed for us *all* upon the cross: as God the Holy Ghost, we shall there find that he is graciously pleased to assist men's hearts, making them feel the great sinfulness of sin: and this Holy Ghost is the Spirit of which Jesus spoke, when he told his disciples that he would send the Comforter,

who should guide them into all truth. It is this Spirit that teaches us to pray aright to God the Father, in the name of God the Son. \*

About this time Jesus went into Peter's house, whose wife's mother lay sick of a fever. When Jesus was told of it, he went to her, rebuked the fever, took her by the hand, and lifted her up; and immediately the fever left her, and she rose up and ministered unto them. We find that the power of Christ to work miracles and heal the sick was made known wherever he went, and although many of the Jews would not own him as the promised Saviour from heaven, yet they could not help believing the things that were really seen by themselves. And it was certain that whoever this great person might be, he was able to heal the sick, to give sight to the blind, and cause the lame to walk, and the dumb to speak. Therefore, on the Sabbath even, when the sun was set, (at which time the day ended with the Jews,) all those people who had any friends sick brought them to Jesus, as well as those who were possessed with devils; and the number was so great, that "all the city was gathered together at the door;" and Jesus laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them. And he cast out the spirits with his word, who, when

they came out of many, cried out, saying, Thou art Christ, the Son of God. But he suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him. These things were done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." "And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." There in the early morning, while most people were sleeping round him, he held communion with God the Father. Christ prayed! Oh, if ~~he who was the Saviour of the world found it~~ cheer his spirit to pray unto his Father and our Father in heaven, should we not gladly follow his example? and when no eye sees us but his who never sleeps, put up our prayers to him, that he would keep us from the evil that is in the world. Simon and those who were with him followed Jesus to the place where he was, and said to him, "All men seek for thee." And he said unto them, "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also; for therefore came I forth."

Jesus then went about from one place to another, shewing his own power and the glory of God, teaching in the synagogues, healing the

the sick, casting out devils; and he was heard of throughout Syria, and multitudes of people followed him from Galilee, and many other places. When he was in a certain city, there came unto him a leper. You may perhaps recollect, that a person is called a leper who is afflicted with the leprosy, which is a very dreadful disease, affecting the whole body. The Jews thought such persons could not be cured except by the great power of God. When the poor wretched man came trembling and full of fear to Jesus, he cast himself down at his feet and said, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand and touched him, saying, "I will; be thou clean" as soon as Jesus had spoken the word, the man was healed. Christ then told the poor man to go his way, shew himself to the priest, and do such things as lepers, seeking to be cured, usually did, according to the law of Moses, but to tell no man who had cured him. But he went out and told many people, which brought such numbers to Jesus to be healed of their diseases, that he could no more openly enter the city, but kept without in the wilderness. Even here people came to him from many places round about.

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## LETTER XI.

JESUS went again to Capernaum after some days, and it was told that he was there, which drew together many people, to whom he preached the word. So many came, that the house would not hold them; some could not even get to the door. The way of building houses in the East is very different to any thing here. The houses being low, with a flat roof, sometimes without any upper story, are built round a paved court, into which the entrance from the street is through a gateway. There are stairs leading to the roof of these buildings, from which it was usual to fix cords across the paved yard in the centre, on which was spread a covering to shelter those within from the heat. Perhaps it was in this paved yard that our Saviour taught: for one day, as he was teaching, with Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, who had come out of every town of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem, we find that "the power of the Lord was present to heal." And some persons came, bringing one who was sick of the



palsy, lying on a bed which was carried by the people, they wished to bring the poor sufferer to Christ, that he might lay his hands on him and heal him, but the multitude was so great that they could not get nigh. Finding this, they went to the roof of the house, which they uncovered, and let the sick man down on his couch into the midst before Jesus. When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, "Son, be of good cheer: thy sins are forgiven thee." The Saviour had until now shewed his power by curing the body; he now did what none can do but God, he forgave the sins of this man; and as disease is one punishment for sin, he shewed that he could remove the disease by taking away the cause of it.

The Pharisees who were sitting by, instead of being convinced that he who could do such mighty acts must be none other than God from heaven, reasoned in their hearts, saying, "This man blasphemeth? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, "Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For is it easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Arise and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, I say unto the

sick of the palsy, Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house." And immediately he rose up before them, took up the bed whercon he lay, and he who had been brought into the presence of Jesus, ~~suffering~~ and helpless, departed to his own house with health and strength of body, and we may suppose with joy of heart, for his sin was forgiven. He departed, giving God the glory. And all who saw him were amazed, saying, We have seen strange things to-day.

After these things, Jesus went forth again by the sea-side; but he was still followed by a multitude of people, and he taught them. On his return from thence, he passed a house which stood by the lake, where sat a man named Matthew to receive the customs, or tolls, of all persons passing over the lake. Among the Jews, those who filled this office were called publicans. As he passed, Jesus said to this man, Follow me; and he left all, rose up, and followed him. Doubtless it was for a good and wise purpose that this man was called to follow Christ. The Jews held all these men in the greatest contempt: they were looked upon as great sinners. If a Jew made any promise to a thief, a murderer, or a publican, he might break it without any blame from his

countrymen. The publicans were looked upon as so lost to every thing good, that their repentance was very difficult. There was a law among this people, that if a Pharisee became a publican he was removed from his order, nor did he regain his rank unless he gave up the office. The Pharisees were very proud men, who thought much of themselves; and perhaps our Lord, when he called Matthew to be his disciple, intended to reprove them for this spirit, so wrong in the sight of God, and to shew them that those most despised by men are sometimes accepted by Him who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.

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## LETTER, XII.

**AFTER** this, there was a feast among the Jews, which was held at Jerusalem, to which place Jesus went at that time. Now there was by one of the gates of the city a pool, which is called in the Hebrew language, Bethesda. This pool had five porches, by which those who were sick or unclean went down to the water. In these doors often lay many blind, lame, and sick people, waiting for the moving of the waters; for at certain times an angel went down and troubled the waters, and the first person who stepped in after this, was healed of whatsoever disease he had. The Son of God, when he came to Jerusalem, turned his steps to this scene of misery; and when he came there, he found one poor man who had been ill for thirty-eight years, lying near the water. But he was so very weak and helpless, that he could not put himself into the pool; and he had no kind friend to do it for him: so he had the pain of lying there to see others go in who were almost as lame as himself, and come

out quite well, and yet he was not able to reach the healing waters for himself. Do you not pity this poor man very much? But he was poor and helpless, and the eye of Him who pitieth our sorrows was cast upon him: for when Jesus saw him, knowing he had been a long while there, he said unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?" The poor man answered him, "Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool; but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me." Jesus then had mercy upon him, and said, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." At the word of Jesus the man was healed of his disease; and, from being quite weak and helpless, he was able to arise, take up his bed, and walk.

This took place on the Sabbath, on which day it was not lawful among the Jews to carry any burden, or to do any manner of work. The Jews, therefore, said unto the man, "It is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed." And they asked him who it was that had told him to do so. The poor man did not know that it was the Saviour of the world that had done so much for him; for Jesus was gone away, because of the multitude. But he afterwards saw him in the temple, where he

said unto him, "Behold, thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." Then the man knew that He who spake these words, He who had healed him in an instant, and given him strength to take up his bed and walk, must have had power from on high; and he told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him whole. Then were the Jews very angry, and sought to kill Jesus, because he had done these things on the Sabbath-day. But Jesus taught the people that it was lawful to do good on the Sabbath. We should always "remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy;" and on that day we should lay aside all worldly cares, that our minds may be at liberty to worship God: neither should we ask others to do for us on that day what might be as well done on any other. But if on that day we have it in our power to shew kindness unto any of our fellow-creatures, we have the example of our blessed Saviour while he was on earth, to shew us that it is lawful on the Sabbath to do unto others as we would that others should do unto us.

On another Sabbath-day we find Jesus again in the synagogue teaching the people, and there was a man whose right hand was withered. The people watched to see whether

#### THE WITHERED HAND HEALED.

Jesus would again heal on the Sabbath-day; but Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto the man that had the withered hand, "Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth." And when the people asked him if it were lawful to heal on the Sabbath-day, Jesus said unto them, I will ask you one thing: Is it lawful on the Sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it? But they held their peace: they had not a word to say. They could not be wicked enough to say that it was right to do evil on God's holy day, or to let a fellow-being perish rather than try to save his life on the Sabbath; and yet so much did they wish to find fault with Him who was without sin, that they would not own that it was lawful to do good on that day. Jesus then asked them, if they had one sheep, and if this poor sheep were to fall into a pit on the Sabbath-day, whether they would not try to get it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep! Thus did Jesus teach the people that it was right at all times to do good on God's holy day. He then said to the poor man with the withered hand, "Stretch forth thine hand: he did so, and it was made whole like the other. When the Pharisees saw what was done, instead

of praising God, they were so very angry, that they went away and talked with one another how they might put him to death. Jesus did not punish them for their disbelief, neither did he then cause any evil to befall them for their wickedness; but he left them for a while; and great multitudes followed him, of those who saw and heard the great things which he did. They went towards the sea-coast, and so many people followed him that his disciples put him into a ship, lest the crowd should press upon him; and he healed many people.

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## LETTER XIII.

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ABOUT this time, Jesus chose out of the multitude which followed him twelve persons, who were to go with him from place to place, and attend him wherever he went. Their names were—Simon, who was also called Peter, and Andrew, his brother; James, the son of Zebedee, and John, the brother of James; Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, and James, the son of Alpheus; Judas, the brother of James, and Simon Zelotes, the Canaanite; and Judas Iscariot, who afterwards betrayed him. They have since been called the twelve apostles, and were with him from this time until he was taken by the Jews to be put to death, into whose power he was wickedly thrown by Judas Iscariot, one of his own disciples.

And now, if you turn to the fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters of Matthew, you will find a sermon that was preached to the people by our Saviour from the top of a mountain, where he took his seat, and a great multitude came with his disciples to hear him. Perhaps, dear chil-

dren, you may think that you cannot understand the words that were spoken by the Son of God himself. But you need not fear, for he loved little children; and it was to the poor and simple-hearted, that he loved to make known his will. And it is so now: God knoweth the proud afar off, but those who are humble and ask wisdom of him, he will teach of his ways. And before I tell you any more of what Jesus did, I must remind you of one or two things which he said at this time. When he began to speak, his good-will to man was shewn in blessings given to those who should love him, and wish to do his will. He said, "Blessed are the *meek*, for they shall inherit the earth:" "Blessed are the *merciful*, for they shall obtain mercy:" "Blessed are the *pure in heart*, for they shall see God:" "Blessed are the *peace-makers*, for they shall be called the children of God."

Now, dear children, let us ask ourselves if we can hope to have these blessings. Are we *meek*? Are we gentle and kind to all around us, patient if told of our faults, and ready to amend our ways? If not, we are not *meek*, and our Saviour's blessing is not for us, until we have prayed to him to soften our hard hearts, and make us humble and lowly, and

willing to think little of ourselves. Are we *merciful*? When we hear others spoken ill of, are we ready to take the part of the absent? If any fault is laid to our charge, are we willing to bear the blame ourselves, rather than see it laid upon another person? If any one offends us or does us wrong, are we willing to forgive them, and shew them mercy? For remember, we have all done much that is amiss in the sight of God; and it is those only who shew mercy to others that are blessed; for they shall find mercy for themselves.

Are we *pure in heart*? Dear children, we cannot be pure in heart, unless we pray to God to cleanse us from all sinful thoughts; for from our hearts proceed strife, envy, hatred, and all bad thoughts which would lead us to commit wicked actions. But it was to take away from us this evil nature that Christ died; and if we pray to him for his grace, he will make us able to do right, and make our hearts right in his sight; for "the blood of Christ cleanceth from all sin." If we are thus made pure in heart, we shall indeed be blessed, for we shall "see God."

Are we *peace-makers*? Do we love to live peaceably with all around us, and, as far as we

can, try to make others do the same? Or do we tell idle tales one of another, thus causing envy and ill-will to be felt? It is a blessed thing to be peace-makers; for remember, dear children, they shall be called the children of God. It is the command of Christ in this very sermon, that we love our enemies, do good to them that hate us, and pray for those who despitefully use us; "that we may be the children of our Father which is in heaven;" for he maketh his sun to shine on all alike, the evil as well as the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. If therefore our heavenly Father, who is so holy, wise, and good, sends this blessing on us all, should not we, who have done much that is wrong, shew kindness to our fellow-sinners? And again, he says, "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." And remember, dear children, that those who follow Christ are as lights in the world, "or as a city that is set on a hill, which cannot be hid. Therefore let your light so shine before men, that they, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven." Let your companions see you meek,

gentle, full of mercy to all, pure in heart, and lovers of peace, and they will learn to love God, and give him the glory that is due unto his name.

There is much more in this sermon that I might tell you; but I hope when you are able you will read it for yourselves. It was at this time that our Lord taught the people to pray in the words of that prayer which you all know as the "Lord's Prayer;" and when you use these words, remember they were the words of Him who spake as man never spake—of Him who knew what we most stood in need of; and feel thankful in your hearts to Almighty God, that you have been thus taught to make known your wants to him.

Although many of the Jews to whom the Gospel was first preached, would not believe Jesus Christ to be that Saviour who had been promised them from heaven, yet we find that some of those who had not, like the people of Israel, been taught to worship the one true God, were brought to own the power of Him who went about doing good to Jew and Gentile. You will remember that at the time these events took place, the Jews were subject to the Romans, who did not worship the true God, but trusted

in idols. But the great God had put it into the hearts of many of these people to believe in his word as truth. When Jesus had ended his sermon on the mount, he came down to Capernaum, where lived a Roman centurion. A centurion was a person who had the command of one hundred soldiers. This man's servant was sick and ready to die; but his master heard of Jesus, and of the many things which he had done, and he sent some of the elders of the Jews to him to beg that he would come and heal his servant. The elders came to Jesus, and prayed him to go, for that this Roman loved their nation, and had built them a synagogue. Jesus went with them. But when he was not far from the house, he met some friends of the centurion, whom he had sent to say that he did not think himself worthy that Jesus should enter under his roof; so humble was the man, so lowly his opinion of himself, and so highly he thought of the power of Jesus, that he said, "Neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee, but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed: for I am a man having soldiers under me, and I say unto this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this,

and he doeth it." Doubtless this Roman soldier thought, that if he who was only a soldier could be thus obeyed, Jesus Christ, who had such power from heaven, need but say the word, and his will should be done. When Jesus heard these words, he turned about unto the people that followed him, and said, "Verily, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." Not in Israel! Not among that people who had been so beloved of God, for whom the Most High had done such mighty wonders, did the Son of God find such faith, such trust in his word, as in the case of this Roman soldier, who had been brought up a heathen, and taught to worship false gods. And Jesus said unto the centurion, "Go thy way: as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed that same hour: for when they that were sent to Jesus returned home, they found the servant well that had been sick."

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## LETTER XIV.

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THE day after Jesus had healed the centurion's servant, he went to a city of Galilee, called Nain. Here lived a poor widow woman, and her only son. This youth, we may suppose, was his mother's great support, perhaps almost the only friend she had in the world, to care about her in her old age. But it was the will of God, in whose hands we all are, and who best knows what is good for us, that this young man should die. You will think, dear children, that it must have been a great grief to this poor woman, when her only child was thus taken from her and she was left in the world alone and friendless; but, no, she was not without a friend. Although the eyes of her son were closed in death, and she was about to follow him to the grave, yet, the eye of Him who never slumbers was open, and had compassion on her grief.

The Jews do not bury their dead within their cities, because all dead bodies are considered as unclean. They are, therefore, taken out of the city to be buried. When this poor



widow's son was dead, many of the neighbours went with her to the funeral. When they came to the gate of the city, just on the other side they met Jesus. He saw the ~~dead~~ man being carried out, and knew that he was the only son of his mother, and she a widow.. He looked upon her with much pity, and said unto her, "Weep not." He then went up to the bier on which the young man was laid: those who bore it stood still, and Jesus said, "Young man, I say unto thee, arise." At this command life and strength came again, and he that had been dead sat up, and began to speak. Then did Jesus give him alive to his mother. What must have been her joy! When she left her desolate home, it was to follow to the grave one who had been the delight of her eyes. Her heart was borne down with grief, for she thought she should never see him more. She felt that the home which had been made happy by his presence would become to her very lonely; and she wept! But before she reached the place where her earthly hopes were to be laid in the dust, she heard the voice of him, who, if he wounds the heart, can also heal it, saying unto her, "Weep not!" Her tears were wiped away; her sorrow changed into joy; gladness

once more sprung up in the heart; for she received her son alive again into her arms, once more to bless her with his love. Let us fancy that we are with them, and that we see them enter their now happy home. Will not their first act be one of thankfulness to God for all his goodness? But we will leave them, and return to those who saw this joyful scene.

We read, that there came a fear on all. They felt that he who could restore the dead to life, must have power from heaven, and they felt afraid! They glorified God, saying, "A great prophet is risen up among us, and God hath visited his people." Thus, dear children, did Jesus Christ shew that he had power over the dead, as well as the living. We have seen that he has given sight to the blind, caused the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, and those that had been lame to walk. But now a young man, who was quite dead, was raised again to life at the word of him who is Judge of quick and dead. Dear children! we shall all one day die. Like this widow's son, we shall be carried to the grave by our friends. And though we may not live again in this world as he did, yet we shall all hear the voice of the Judge of all the earth, calling upon us to rise from our graves,

Those that have done good to a happy life without end, in heaven, those that have done evil to everlasting punishment and wo. Some of the Jews did not believe that the dead would be raised again. But by thus shewing himself to be the Lord of life and death, Jesus has taught the Christian to hope that when all the troubles of this life are ended he will be permitted to live for ever in the presence of the Most High, where he will meet all who have been justly dear to him in this world. There will he see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the good men of whom we read in the Bible. It was for this, dear children, that Jesus Christ left the bosom of his Father, in order that he might come upon the earth, and, by his death on the cross, bear the punishment of our sins for us; that we, by believing on him, and walking in his steps, might, by his Holy Spirit, be made fit to appear before our Father in heaven. Let us, then, dear children, thank God, that he has given us the hope of eternal life, without which St. Paul, a preacher of the Gospel, says, we should be of all men most miserable. For it was the hope of the joy that shall be hereafter, which gave the disciples and followers of Christ strength to bear their trials, when their Master

was taken from them, and put to death by wicked men. It was this hope which filled them with joy, when they, in their turn, were called upon to give up their very lives for Christ's sake. They were stoned, they were beaten with many stripes, they were burnt to death, they were thrown to wild beasts, and torn to pieces. Yet their faith did not fail them. For they had repented of their sins, the blood of Christ had cleansed them,—his hand held them up, and they trusted in his word, who had said, "Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." And it is this hope, dear children, which should make us love to obey God. We should not act well merely because it will please our fellow-creatures, or that we may have praise of men; for this will do us no good, unless our hearts are right in the sight of him who knows our most secret thoughts. But the love of Christ, and the hope of eternal life which he has given us, should so rule our hearts, as to make us think a whole life, spent in his service, too little to shew our gratitude for all his mercies.

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## LETTER XV.

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ABOUT this time John the Baptist, who had been thrown into prison some time before by Herod, sent two of his disciples to Jesus, and said, "Art thou he that should come? or do we look for another?" We must not think from this, that John had any doubt in his own mind, that Jesus was indeed the Son of God and the Saviour of the world; for he had seen the clouds open, and heard a voice from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." But he might wish that those whom he sent should hear the words of Jesus for themselves. When John's two disciples came to Christ, they found him curing the sick, healing many plagues, casting out evil spirits, and giving sight to the blind. The Saviour made them observe these things, and said, "Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached

unto them." These things the prophets, in the Old Testament, had foretold that Jesus should do; and when all these things, really came to pass, surely there was no need for Jesus to own himself the Christ.—I have told you before, dear children, of the Pharisees. One of this proud sect asked Jesus to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. In the Eastern countries they do not sit on chairs as we do when we take our meals, but they have couches drawn round the table, on which they recline; that is, half sitting, they rest on one side, and their feet are turned behind them. It was a custom among the Jews, when they had been walking, to put off their shoes, and before eating to wash their feet, and, when a guest entered a house, water was generally brought to him for this purpose, that he might refresh himself. While Jesus was sitting at meat at the Pharisee's table, there came in a poor woman who had lived a very sinful life. But we may suppose she was sorry for her sins, and had heard that Jesus had power to forgive sin; for she brought an alabaster box of ointment, and went behind Jesus, and washed his feet with her tears; wiped them with the hair of her head, kissed his feet, and

anointed them with the ointment. When the Pharisee saw this, he thought in his heart, If this man were a prophet, he would have known what kind of woman this is; for she is a sinner! Doubtless, this man felt well pleased with his own actions, and would not have liked that so sinful a person as he thought this woman to be, should have touched him. But Jesus looks at the heart, he knows all that is in it, and can tell when we wish to please him. He knew that this woman had been a sinner, but he also knew that she had repented of her evil ways, that her heart was humbled in the sight of God, and that in thus waiting upon him, she was shewing forth her love and gratitude. Jesus knew also what was passing in the heart of the Pharisee, and he said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee.—“There was a certain creditor which had two debtors:” a creditor, dear children, is a person to whom we owe any thing, a debtor is a person owing it; that is, if you owed me a penny I should be your creditor, and you would be my debtor. But, to return: one of this man’s debtors owed him five hundred pence, and the other fifty; and when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Then said Jesus to Simon,

"Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most?" Simon said, "I suppose that he to whom he forgave most." And he said unto him, "thou hast rightly judged." And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, "Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet; but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss; but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet: my head with oil thou didst not anoint; but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore, I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little." And he said unto her, "Thy sins are forgiven. And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also?" And Jesus said to the woman, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

Thus did Jesus teach a lesson of humility to those who are proud in heart. While this woman lived in sin, she was not pleasing in the sight of God, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; but no sooner did she forsake her evil ways, and turn unto the Lord, than he



forgave her sins, which had been many, and shewed that she was more fit to approach him, than the proud Pharisee, who thought himself so good, that he did not need forgiveness. Dear children, we are all debtors to God. Some of us may be more sinful than others, and some others we may be tempted to think more sinful than ourselves. But let us not despise them, or think unkindly of them, for we do not know how much they may have been tempted. Perhaps, if we had been in their place, we might have been as bad, or worse. But, remember, we all sin daily in the sight of God. We came into the world his debtors, and the fresh sins of every day do but make our debt larger. We cannot pay it; for even if we were not to commit a single fresh sin from this day to the end of our lives, it would not blot out those we have already committed; still less would it do away with the debt that was standing when we first came into the world. But, dear children, God will forgive us this debt, for the sake of Jesus Christ, who gave up his life on the cross, that our sins might be washed away in his blood, our debts paid. Should we not, then, love one who has done all this for us? Oh, yes, the more sinful we feel ourselves to be,

the greater will be our love to him, who will say to all who truly repent, and believe the Gospel, "Go in peace, thy sins are forgiven thee."

Then did Jesus go about through many cities and villages, preaching and teaching the Gospel, and with him were his twelve disciples, and some women whom he had healed. Among them was Mary Magdalen, out of whom he had cast seven devils. They went into a house; but the people did so crowd about him, that he could not find time so much as to eat bread. Here he again shewed his power over Satan; for we read that a person was brought unto him possessed with a devil, blind and dumb; and Jesus healed him, so that he both spake and saw. Then did he speak many words to the people, and while he yet talked, behold his mother and his brethren came to the place, but they could not get near him, because the crowd was great. Then those who were about him said, "Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee." And Jesus said, "Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?" and he looked around on them which sat about him, stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, "Behold

my mother and my brethren!" Here we see, dear children, how Jesus condescended to love those who gave up all other things, that they might serve and follow him. They were as dear to him, as that mother, to whom you may remember he was so dutiful when he was graciously pleased to appear as a little child. And not only those who loved him then, does Christ love : but those who love to walk in his ways, and do the will of God, will always be loved by him ; for he said also, "Whoever shall hear the word of God, and do the will of my Father who is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother. "

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## LETTER XVI.

So much did our Saviour wish that those things which he taught the people should be attended to and understood by them, that he condescended to teach them in a way then often in use among the Jews; I mean the teaching by parables. A parable is a kind of story, or fable, about something quite well known to us, but which is meant at the same time to give us some lesson on a subject which we do not so well understand. Thus, at the present time, by telling them of a sower going forth to sow his seed, he speaks of the way in which different people receive the grace of God into their hearts. It was one day, as he sat by the sea-side, and great multitudes were come together to hear him, that Jesus went into a ship, from whence he taught, by a parable, the people who stood by the shore.

He told them of a sower who went out to sow his seed: and it came to pass, as he sowed, that some fell by the wayside, where it was trodden down, and the birds of the air came and devoured it. Some fell on stony ground, where it

had not much earth, so that it sprang up quickly but as soon as the sun was up it was scorched, and withered away, because it had so little root. Some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up with it, and choked it; so that it yielded no fruit. But some seed there was which fell into good ground, and sprang up, and increased, and bore much fruit, some an hundred fold, some sixty fold, and some thirty fold.

When we read the Bible, dear children, we should not trust too much to our own wisdom to understand what may be written there, but should ask those who may be better able to tell us. Above all, we should pray to God that he would give us grace so to read, that we may receive instruction from his most holy book. In the present instance we need not fear lest we should not have the right meaning of the parable; for our Lord himself explained it afterwards to those who were about him. The seed which was sown, he declared to be the word of God. The sower of the seed, is the sower of the word. He that heareth the word of God and understandeth it not, this is he which received seed by the way-side; and the enemy of our souls, who is ever on the watch to tempt us to do evil, and thus destroy the good seed that might otherwise spring up

in our hearts, may be compared to those birds which picked up the seed that fell by the wayside. There are some people, dear children, who perhaps for a while receive the word of God into their hearts, and seem as if they would wish to do his will; their *feelings* are perhaps touched for the time with love to God, but their *hearts* are not *changed*. Thus they give way to the first temptation with which they are tried, for they have not the love of God in Christ Jesus so deeply fixed in their hearts, as to make them able to bear all things patiently for his sake. The hearts of these people may be compared to that stony ground in which the seed sprung up quickly; but as soon as it felt the scorching sun, it withered away. There are some also who have the word of God in their hearts; but they are so taken up with the cares and pleasures of this life, which so fill their whole hearts, as to prevent the growth of that good seed which is sown by the grace of God in the hearts of all his people.

This, dear children, is what is meant by that thorny ground into which the sower dropt some of his seed, which became choked by thorns and brambles. But that good ground, into which some of the seed fell, and in which it grew up strongly,

and bore much fruit, tells us of those who hear the word, and, with an humble, simple heart, seek daily for help from their heavenly Father, to enable them to give up their lives to serve him. It is in the hearts of such as these that this seed takes deep root downward, and fills them with love to God. The fruit which it bears is love to our fellow-creatures, shewn by gentleness to all around us, a wish to do good to all, and a lowly opinion of ourselves.

From this parable we may learn, that the grace of God is given to every man. We are all asked to come to him, dear children; and if we do so, humbly and truly, he will in no wise cast us out. You see it was the same seed that was sown by the sower in different places, but it did not all come up alike. Thus it is with ourselves. God is gracious to us all. But as the seed is very much smaller than the plant which springs from it, so is the grace of God in our hearts; and if we are careless or inattentive to this still small voice within us, we may soon cease to hear it. Let us then pray to God, so to soften our hard hearts, that the good seed which he graciously condescends to sow there may not wither away.

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## LETTER XVII.

AFTER Jesus had taught many more parables, he said unto his disciples, "Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. Then came to him a person who was a scribe, and who we may suppose had heard all that had been said by him, saying, "Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." And Jesus said unto him, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." Thus shewing him, that if he wished to follow Christ, he must give up all other things. For He who came down from heaven above for the sake of sinners, spent his whole life, while upon earth, in going about from place to place doing good to man. He therefore had no home in which to rest himself after all his toils: the very birds and beasts were better off in this way than he was, for they had their nests, and places of rest. Surely, dear children, we should be willing to leave every thing that would prevent us from obeying Him who was God as well as man; who laid



aside his glory, led a life of great trial among sinful men, and shed his blood on the cross, that we might find pardon for our sins, and live for ever in heaven. If this scribe felt his heart really touched with the words of Jesus, doubtless he thought it better to follow such a teacher through poverty and want, than to give up his hope of eternal life for the sake of any earthly good, however dear it might be. And now, dear children, let us ask ourselves how much we are willing to give up for the sake of this Saviour who gave his life for us? Do not think, because we may not be called upon, as many have been, to forsake our friends, to leave our happy homes, to suffer in prison and in chains, and even to die rather than deny his name; that we can do nothing by which to shew our love to God, and our wish to follow the example of Him who is a high and holy pattern for us all: for there is much that we may all do, however young we may be, or however lowly our rank in life. Christ has died for us all, that we might be made friends again with our Father in heaven; and he has promised to put his Holy Spirit into the hearts of all, to lead us into all truth. Let us then begin each day with prayer to God, that for the sake of his Son, Christ

Jesus, he will be pleased to put his Spirit into our hearts; we shall then be better able to please him, by setting a watch upon our lips that we speak no hasty or evil word, by obeying our parents, by living peaceably with our companions, by being gentle, and shewing kindness to all.

While Jesus was crossing the sea of Galilee with his disciples, he gave them another proof of his great power. We read that, as they sailed, he fell asleep; and while he lay asleep in the vessel, a great storm arose. The wind became very high, and the sea so rough, that the waves beat into the ship. Then did his disciples wake him, saying, "Lord, save us, we perish!" And he saith unto them, "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" But he arose, and said unto the sea, "Peace, be still." And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. Jesus then found fault with his disciples for not having more faith, saying, "Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?" Those who were in the ship with him wondered and feared very much; and said to one another, "What manner of man is this? for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him." Yes, dear children; and not only is the deep and

wide ocean, with its grand and fearful waves, under his power, but he can also say to the heart, when filled with angry passion, "Peace, be still;" and cause us to become humble and forgiving one to another, if we cry unto him. When the ship in which Jesus and his disciples were, reached the other side of the lake, they landed in the country of the Gadarenes, sometimes called also the country of the Gergesenes, which is over-against Galilee. When Jesus came out of the ship, he met a poor unhappy man who was possessed with devils, which made him so fierce, that no man could tame him: for if they bound him with chains, he would tear them in pieces; and always, night and day, he was in the mountains, among the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones. The tombs were often in this country caves cut out of the rock, and along the borders of the lake of Gennesaret may still be seen their remains. When this poor man saw Jesus afar off, he ran and fell down before him, and worshipped him, and cried with a loud voice, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? When our Lord commanded the evil spirit to come out of the man, he said, "Art thou come to torment us before

the time? I beseech thee that thou torment me not!" Here then we find Jesus spoken to as the Son of the Most High God, by those who dare not deny his power; for it is written, "the devils also believe and tremble." Near the mountain where Jesus met this man, there was a herd of swine feeding, and the devils besought him, saying, "If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine." Jesus said unto them, "Go:" and the unclean spirits went and entered into the swine, and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters. And they that fed the swine fled, and told it in the city and in the country. Then came out the whole city to meet Jesus, and to see what was done; and when they saw him that had been possessed with a devil, sitting clothed, and in his right mind, at the feet of Jesus, they were so filled with fear and awe, that they prayed him to depart out of their coasts. Instead of feeling thankful at the presence of one who could do so much for them, they wished to get rid of him. Doubtless they feared that if he stayed longer, he would punish them yet more for their many sins than by the loss of their swine. When he went back to the ship, the poor man whom he had healed begged

to go with him ; but Jesus sent him away, saying, "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee ;" so he went away, and made it known through all the city ; and all men did wonder.

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## LETTER XVIII.

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You may remember that I told you how much the Publicans were despised among the Jews. About this time, Jesus was pleased to go and dine at the house of one of this class. The man's name was Levi. He made a feast in his house, and invited many of the same way of life as himself, to meet Jesus. This did not please the Scribes and Pharisees; and they asked the disciples, "Why their Master ate and drank with publicans and sinners?" Jesus himself heard their question, and said, "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance. Here is a lesson for us, dear children, as well as for the people of that day. It would teach us to despise no person, however poor, wretched, sinful, or miserable they may seem to us: for, as those who are sick stand in need of a physician to cure them, so do such as these need the forgiveness and mercy of God in Christ Jesus. And it is also those who feel themselves to be very sinful,

to whom God will give grace to repent. Such people are more acceptable in his sight than the proud self-righteous person, who thinks he has no need of repentance. It is the poor and contrite, those who are filled with sorrow for their sins, that he will deign to bless. Besides, you will think with me, that if the publicans were really such wicked people as the Jews thought them, there was the more need that the Saviour should go amongst them, and shew them the error of their ways. It was therefore very selfish of these Scribes and Pharisees to murmur thus. Had they been good men, they would have been glad indeed to see that people so poor and miserable, so shut out from the love and good-will of the rest of the world, had thus an opportunity of being taught their duty to God and man.

Then Jesus came to the city of Capernaum, where the people gladly received him; and many persons were gathered together near the sea, waiting for him. While he was teaching them, there came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name, and fell down at his feet, begging that he would come into his house, for he had one only daughter, about twelve years old, and she lay a-dying. We may suppose that

her father had heard of the miracles done by the Saviour: therefore, as soon as he knew he was come that way, we may think it was with some faith and hope that he earnestly besought Jesus, saying, "I pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live." Jesus yielded to this earnest request, and went with Jairus, and so did his disciples.

They were followed by a great crowd of people, among whom was a poor woman who had been ill for twelve years. She had suffered much, spent all her money that she might be cured, and still she was no better, but rather worse. When she saw how the people pressed round Jesus, so great was her belief in his power, that she said to herself, "If I may but touch his clothes, I shall be made whole." Thinking that she should not be seen in the crowd, she came behind him, touched the hem of his garment, and immediately felt that she was healed. She was mistaken in thinking that her action would not be known: for Jesus turned about in the crowd, and said, "Who touched my clothes?" All the people denied that they had done it. Peter, and the disciples who were with him, said, "Master, thou seest the multitude press thee, and sayest thou, Who



touched me?" And Jesus said, "Somebody hath touched me." And he looked about to see her that had done this thing. Remember, dear children; we can hide nothing from Him who knows all that passes in our hearts; who not only sees all that we do, but who knows all we wish to do; who can tell our very thoughts. The poor woman, when she found that she could not be hid, came, full of fear, and fell down trembling before Jesus, and told him all the truth. If she had been afraid that he would be angry with her, how great must have been her joy when Jesus said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague. And the woman was made whole from that hour.

While this was passing on the way, there came some one from the ruler's house, and said unto him, "Thy daughter is dead; why troublest thou the Master any farther?" When Jesus heard this, he said unto the ruler of the synagogue, "Be not afraid; only believe, and she shall be made whole." When they came to the house, he found that the child's death was generally known: for, as was the custom at such times, the people were come together, and they were weeping and wailing, for they were sure

she was dead. Jesus would not allow any one to go in with him but Peter, James, and John the brother of James. And when he was come in, he saith unto them, "Why make ye this ado? Weep not: for the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth." But they laughed at him. All around were certain she was dead; and it was well they should be so, that they might be better able to speak to the truth of the miracle that Christ was about to perform. When Jesus had put the people all out, he took the father and mother of the child, and his disciples who were with him, and went into the room where the dead body was lying. He took one of her hands, saying, "Damsel, I say unto thee, arise." Her spirit came again, and the child rose up and walked; and Jesus commanded that something should be given her to eat. Then were her parents astonished, and Jesus charged them that they should tell no man what was done. But the fame of it went abroad into all that land.

On the same day, Jesus cured two blind men, who followed him, crying and saying, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on us!" They also brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil; him Jesus also cured, so that he spake. Then did the people wonder, saying, "It was

never ~~so~~ seen in Israel. He then went away into his own country, Nazareth, and his disciples followed him. There he was again ill treated: for, when he began to teach on the Sabbath-day, they said, "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary? Are not his brethren with us?" And they wondered in themselves how he came to be so wise, and to do such mighty works. Thus you see, though they saw his mighty works, and heard his gracious words, yet they would not believe on him; and Jesus said unto them, "A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, among his own kin, and in his own house." We read that he did no great works there because of their unbelief, save that he laid his hands on a few sick folks and healed them. And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching and preaching the Gospel, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

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## LETTER XIX.

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It was at this time that Jesus called together his disciples, and gave them power over unclean spirits to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness. He then sent them forth to preach the kingdom of God to the Jews. They were not to go to any other people; but were sent by their Divine Master through those cities and villages, to which he himself intended to go.

He sent them out by two and two, and commanded them not to make ready any thing to take with them, to use by the way. They were not to take bread, neither gold nor silver with which to buy food, nor any other clothes but those they had on; for (said their Lord) "the workman is worthy of his meat." And surely we may suppose that those people to whom they preached the Gospel, if they rightly prized it, would willingly give part of their daily bread to those who went about doing good, and giving up their whole lives, to feed the souls of all around them with that bread which comes down from heaven.

Thus went out these holy men of old, trusting in His word who sent them, saying, "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." Jesus foretold that his followers should be taken by their enemies, and brought before governors and kings for his sake. But they were commanded not to think beforehand what they should say to prove themselves not guilty; for their Lord promised them, that the Spirit of God would put it into their hearts what they should speak in that same hour.

Then said Jesus, "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Yes, dear children, it is indeed this great Being whom we should fear to offend; Him who (if we do not repent of our many sins in this world) can punish us in another. The fear of man should never prevent our doing what we know to be right in the sight of God; for (as our Saviour told his disciples) not even a sparrow can fall to the ground without his leave. So can no sorrow come near us without the knowledge of him who rules the world; and who knows what is best for all his creatures: for the very hairs of

our head are all numbered. We have souls which must live for ever; and are, therefore, of more value than many sparrows. If, therefore, we seek to please God, we need not fear what man can do unto us. And do not forget that Jesus Christ told his disciples, at this time, that those who should confess, or own him to be the Saviour, before men, he would confess before his Father in heaven.

But how are we to confess Christ before men, perhaps you will say? Simply, by putting your trust in him, and obeying his commandments. If your father or mother, dear children, were to wish you to do any one thing, and you were to obey them, you would shew to all around that you thought they had a right to command you. You would thus confess them before men. And when we pray to God for the sake of his Son Christ Jesus, that he will teach us his will, and make us able to obey him by putting his good Spirit into our hearts: when we think humbly of ourselves, are gentle and kind to all around; when we are willing cheerfully to obey our parents and teachers, by patiently and steadily doing our duty from day to day, we confess to all who know us, that the Spirit of Christ rules in our hearts, and that we

wish to be his followers. Thus, even a child may confess Christ before men. And sad indeed will it be if we do not own him in our actions; for he hath said, "Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven."

Jesus sent a blessing with his disciples to all who should receive them for his sake, saying, "Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward." Thus, if we shew even a little act of kindness to any one for the love of Christ, we shall not lose our reward. But we must have no other motive in our hearts. It must not be done only to please ourselves, or because we think people will speak well of us for it,—no, we must be willing to do it even if it should cause us to be unkindly thought of. The twelve then went their way, preaching the Gospel, and healing the sick everywhere.

I told you, in the Fifteenth Letter, that John the Baptist had been thrown into prison by Herod, because he had reprov'd him for having done wrong; but I have not yet told you that John was most cruelly put to death by him.

On Herod's birth-day, when he made a feast for the lords, captains, and chief people of Galilee, the daughter of Herodias came in and danced before them. Her dancing so pleased the king, that he told her to ask any thing she pleased of him, and he would give it to her, even to the half of his kingdom. You will think this was a very foolish promise for any king to make; and perhaps had he known what her request would be, Herod would not have said what he did. Salome (that was the name of the young woman) went to Herodias her mother, and asked her what she should demand. Now, this woman had been the cause of John's being cast into prison. She greatly feared him, and wished to have her revenge. She was, therefore, so wicked, so lost to all sense of duty, both to God and man, as to put it into the heart of her young daughter to go to the king, and say, "Give me here John the Baptist's head in a charger." A charger is a large dish; and it is still the custom in some nations of the East, when a person has to die by order of the law, that when the officer has cut off the head, he carries it to his master, as a proof that he has obeyed the order. When Herod heard this wicked request, he was very sorry, yet he



would not recall his promise, although the keeping his word would cause him to sin against God, by taking away the life of a fellow-creature. So great was the pride of his heart, that rather than own himself to have been very wrong in making such a rash vow, he sent, and had John beheaded in prison, and the head was brought and given to Salome, who carried it to her mother.

How very dreadful, dear children, to think, that any one should become so full of malice and ill-will, so lost to all good and gentle feelings, as thus to take pleasure in the misery of a human being; thus to take away that life which God has given. But John had no need to fear death,—for him the change was a happy one; and when his body was beheaded, he left a gloomy prison into which he had been put because he did his duty without fear of man; and his soul, that immortal part which never dies, gave itself up to him who created it. What must have been the feelings of the unhappy woman who was the cause of his death, if ever she was made to feel her great guilt? Dear children, let us pray for grace to be kept from giving way to temptation. For if we once leave the right path, we cannot tell

what evil we may be tempted to do, or whether grace from above may be given us to repent.

Some time after this, when Herod heard of Jesus, and of all that had been done by him, his guilty conscience troubled him, and he thought it was John whom he had so wickedly slain, risen from the dead. For he said unto his servants, "John have I beheaded, but who is this of whom I hear such things? It is John; he is risen from the dead."

## LETTER XX.

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.. WHEN the disciples had finished all the works for which they had been sent out, they went back to Jesus, and told him all things they had done, and what they had taught. There were many people about; therefore Jesus said unto them, "Come ye apart into a desert place, and rest awhile." And he took them with him, and went away privately over the sea of Galilee, or Tiberias, into a desert place near the city of Bethsaida.

When the people heard of it, they ran out of all the cities near, and came to them. Jesus, when he came out and saw so many people, was moved with compassion, because they had no one to teach them the right way. He pitied them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd; and although he had intended to be alone with the disciples for a while, he did not send them away, but spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and began to teach them

many things. He also healed their sick; and many followed him, when they saw the miracles which he did. Jesus then went up into a mountain, where he sat with his disciples. Here the people came to him; and when he lifted up his eyes, and saw how many there were, he said to Philip, "Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" Jesus said this to prove Philip, for he himself knew what he would do. And might we not expect that, as Philip must have daily seen the mighty works done by our Lord, he would have felt that he who could cause the blind to see, the dumb to speak, and the lame to walk, could by his Divine power cause five thousand people to be fed. But Philip does not seem to have thought thus; for he looked round upon the people, and said, "Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not enough for them, that every one may take a little."

When the day was nearly over, the disciples came to Jesus, and begged that he would send away the multitude, that they might go into the towns and country round about to lodge, and buy themselves bread, for they had nothing to eat. But our Lord said, "They need not depart; give ye them to eat." They thought by this that he meant them to go and bring some

food; and they said unto him, "Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat?" Jesus then asked how many loaves they had with them. When they had looked, they said, "Five, and two small fishes." One of them, named Andrew, said, "Here is a lad which hath five barley loaves and two small fishes; but what are they among so many?" Thus you see they had but very little. And we might indeed say, "What are they among so many?" did we not know that he who caused the widow's barrel of meal and cruse of oil to waste not with daily use, while there was a famine in the land, could from this little store cause a great multitude to partake of a full meal.

Dr. E. D. Clarke says in his Travels, that, in passing through this country, their guide pointed out to them a sloping spot, from the heights on their right hand, down which they had themselves come, as the place where this miracle was wrought. There was much grass in the place, upon which our Lord commanded his disciples to make the men sit down in groups of fifty persons. Jesus took the bread, and, looking up to heaven, he gave his blessing, then brake it, and gave to his disciples, who parted it

among the people. This was done also with the fishes; and not only did they all eat and were filled, but there was some left. For when they had all done, Jesus said, "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost;" upon which they took up twelve baskets full: and they that had eaten were about five thousand, besides women and children. Those who saw this miracle said, "This is of a truth that prophet which should come into the world."

It is right, dear children, to be careful in our manner of living, that we should all do something, and not eat the bread of idleness. It is also very wrong to be wasteful of the good things which God hath given us, as we may learn from the command of our Saviour, to gather up what was left, that nothing should be lost. But it is also wrong to think too much about what we shall eat or drink, or what we shall put on; for our Saviour himself hath told us not to take too much thought for the morrow. He hath said, "Look at the lilies of the field; they toil not, neither do they spin, yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." No king, dear children, had ever robe of state so bright and beautiful as the form and colour of many of the little flowers which God

has made. And he who sends his dew and rain to feed and nourish this part of his works will provide for all those who put their trust in him, and obey his laws. And here I would just observe, that it was while the people were listening to the commands of Christ, that he was graciously pleased to supply their wants. Let us remember how many of *our* wants are daily supplied by a bountiful Creator. When we wake in the morning, it is he that we have to thank for our refreshing sleep; for our daily bread, which gives us health and strength to serve him; for all those kind friends, whose love makes each day so pleasant to us. In short, every good gift cometh from above, from our Father which is in heaven.

Let us then ask ourselves, dear children, if we are giving up our whole hearts to obey the commands of Christ. Do we fear God, and love him with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul, and with all our strength? Do we give him thanks? Do we put our whole trust in him? Do we honour his holy name and word, and seek to serve him truly all the days of our life? If this is indeed the desire of our hearts, God will have mercy upon us, and for the sake of his Son Jesus Christ will

pardon all our sins. Let us then daily put our trust in him who hath said, that, if we seek first the kingdom of God, all that we want shall be added thereto.



## LETTER XXI.

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THE people were so much surprised at this last miracle, of the loaves and fishes, that although Jesus had said, his kingdom was not of this world, they would have taken him by force, and made him a king. They did not understand that his wish was to make himself a kingdom in every human heart, where he might rule and reign. It was not earthly power and glory that he sought, for he had left a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; and to him who was King of kings, the power of the greatest earthly prince was as nothing. When Jesus found what they wished, he made his disciples enter the ship, and cross over to Bethsaida, while he sent away the people. When he was left by himself he went up into a mountain to pray; and when the evening was come, he was there alone. It must indeed have been a comfort to his heavenly mind, to leave for a while the company of those around him, even of those

who knew him best, and loved him most; for they could not have been able to share many of his feelings; that he might pour out his soul to his Father in heaven, and thus hold communion with that heaven which was his dwelling-place.

Christ was on the mountain alone. His disciples were at sea in their ship, tossing about among the waves, with the wind blowing against them. It was quite dark, and Jesus was not come to them. Their sails were of no use in the storm, and they could not get on. But he who fed the multitude saw their distress. He saw them toiling very hard, trying to row the ship. This was in the fourth watch of the night, that is, between three and six o'clock in the morning. The Jews, at this time, had learnt of the Romans to divide their night into four portions of time, each of which they called a watch. The first ended at nine o'clock in the evening, the second at twelve o'clock at night, the third at three in the morning, and the fourth at six o'clock. Thus, you see, the night was far spent, when Jesus, seeing their distress, went unto them, walking on the sea.

When the disciples first saw him coming towards the ship, they were afraid, saying, "It is a spirit!" and they cried out for fear. But Jesus

spake unto them, saying, "Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid. Then said Peter, "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water;" and Jesus said, "Come." Peter then went down from the ship, and began to walk on the sea, to meet his Divine Master. No doubt, in his great joy at seeing him in the midst of their trouble, Peter felt able to do any thing at his "bidding, and without any fear trusted himself on the stormy wave, at the command of him whom the winds and waves obey. But when he had left the ship behind him, and found the wind very high, and the sea rough, his fear was so great that he forgot his trust in God, felt afraid, and began to sink. But when he cried, "Lord, save me!" Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, saying, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" They then went up to the ship together, and were gladly taken in by the other disciples. By this time the wind had ceased to blow, yet we read, that *immediately* the ship was at the land whither they went." No sooner did Jesus go into the vessel than they found themselves at that place which they had been trying in vain to reach without his aid. The same power that had calmed the raging sea could bring

them to the end of their voyage, swift as thought! But those who were on board were very much amazed, and wondered. They did not seem to remember that he who had given food to a hungry multitude, and caused them to be filled with a few loaves and fishes, could also make the winds and waves obey him. We are told, "*Their hearts were hardened,*" yet they could not help worshipping Jesus, and saying, "Of a truth thou art the Son of God!"

And now, dear children, I wish you to feel in your hearts that he who did these mighty works, he who performed these wonders, he who saved Peter from sinking into the wave, knows at this very moment every thought of your hearts. Life, dear children, has been compared to an ocean, over which we are all sailing. Heaven is the port to which we are bound. Should we meet with storms by the way, should God see fit to send us sorrow, that he may know whether we trust in his power and goodness; let us remember that we are in the hands of the same Being who stretched out his hand and saved Peter. In his love let us trust. It was only while Peter had a full belief that Jesus could indeed make him able to walk upon the sea, that he had power to do so; as soon as he was

frightened, he lost his trust in him who is mighty to save, and he began to sink. But God is ever ready to hear all who cry unto him, and if we seek to serve him, and believe that he is able to help those who wish to do his will, he will be with us and help us, as he did Peter, when he cried, "Lord, save me!"

## LETTER XXII.

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WHEN Jesus and his disciples reached the land, the people knew our Lord; and it was talked of in all the country round, that he who had done so many miracles was come. People were brought to him even in their beds. And wherever Jesus went, those who were sick were taken by their friends and laid in his path, in all the villages, cities, and country through which he passed. So eager were they, so sure that he could do them good, that they were content if they did but touch the hem of his garment; and we find that as many as touched him were made whole.

Many people came to seek Jesus, when they heard of the miracles which he had wrought. But he knew their thoughts, and told them, that it was not because they felt love and honour for him who could do such wonders, that they sought him, but "because of the loaves and fishes:" because they hoped to get some good thing for themselves. He told them they should not labour for the meat which perisheth, but for

that which would last for ever. The people then said unto him, "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?" Jesus said, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." He then told them how needful it was to believe on him, for he said, "*I am the bread of life.*" By bread is here meant our needful food, without which we could not live; and Jesus, when he calls himself *the bread of life*, means, that to believe in him as our Saviour is as needful to the saving of the soul from everlasting death and misery, as food is needful to keep the body alive and well.

You need not again to be told, my dear young friends, *why* the Son of God came down from heaven. You know that he came to bear the punishment of our sins. But you must not think of this as of something which was of more consequence to the Jews of old than to yourselves. You must not think of it as a thing which you may forget or remember as you please. I wish *you*, my dear child, who may now be reading my little book, to feel that, if Jesus Christ our Saviour had not come down from heaven, and suffered upon the cross for us, and thus made us friends again with God, you must have gone to hell when you die.

You could not have seen that happy place, where the angels and the spirits of just men whose sins have been washed away, and whose souls have been made perfect by the blood of Christ, sing praises to our God who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever. Think of Jesus as of your heavenly friend, for whose sake you will be allowed to enter that happy place. Think that, without him, you would be miserable, both now and for ever. Think that it is he who sits at the right hand of God, and makes your peace with our Almighty Father, who is so pure and holy, that all our best actions, even our very prayers, have something sinful in them in his sight. Think of these things, and surely you will feel your hearts glow with love and gratitude to the Saviour of sinners. And it will be at his word that the graves shall open, and the dead be raised to life again. Oh! remember, that if you do not make him your friend now, and seek to please him daily, by doing his will, what will be your feelings then? You will wish that you could hide yourself from his eye. But nothing can then shelter you from the anger of a just God. Let me then entreat you, dear children, to make this Saviour your friend, for he hath



said, "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out."

All the miracles of which we have read at present were wrought by Jesus at the request of the Jews; the people among whom our Saviour first came into the world, that people whose prophets had been taught of God to foretell the coming of that Saviour who was now denied by so many of them. All the other nations were called Gentiles; they worshipped idols, were very wretched and ignorant, and did not believe in the name of God. But the time was at hand when the Jews were to find that God was no respecter of persons, but that in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him. For we now meet with a woman of Canaan, whose daughter had an unclean spirit. This woman was one of the Gentiles; but she had heard of Jesus, and came, and cried, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David!" What a lesson for some of the Jews, who ought to have known better, was the simple faith of this poor woman! for she had heard of the wonders which Jesus had wrought among his own people, and she did not doubt that he would do the same for her. "But he

answered her not a word." He took no notice of her cries and tears, till at length his disciples besought him, saying, "Send her away, for she crieth after us." Then said Jesus, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Though he saw fit thus to try her faith in him, yet she did not give up her trust, but came and fell at his feet, and worshipped him, saying, "Lord, help me!"

The Jews were very proud as a nation: they looked upon themselves as the children of God, and treated every other people as dogs. Jesus knew this, and he knew also the gentleness and humility of the poor woman to whom he was speaking; and he said, "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it to the dogs." And she said, "Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table." So far from being silenced by these words of our Lord, she ventured to shew, that, if the very dogs were allowed to eat the crumbs which fell from their master's well-filled table, she might be allowed to beg for one miracle in her favour, which would be but as a crumb, compared with the many mercies which the Jews had received from him. Then said Jesus, "Oh, woman, great is thy faith! Be it unto

thee even as thou wilt." And her daughter was made whole from that very hour. Thus was the faith of this poor woman made known to all who stood round. And not only might they learn from it to put their trust in Jesus, but it was meant to shew that, not merely for the Jews had a Saviour risen, but that by his blood multitudes should be redeemed to God, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.

After this, Jesus came unto the sea of Galilee, where also he healed many. Here he again fed a hungry multitude with seven loaves and a few little fishes, and caused seven basketsful to be left after four thousand men had eaten, besides women and children. And let us remember, that the same power which fed the Israelites in the desert, and satisfied the multitude who went with Jesus into the wilderness, causes the grain of wheat which we put into the ground to swell, and put forth its young shoots; first the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear. He sends the gentle dew to nourish its roots, the welcome shower to make it grow, the bright warm sunbeam to ripen the fruit. He has given us the power of using this blessed gift for our own comfort and support: and

grateful should we be for his daily mercies. When we put a seed into the ground, we know what it will become, we can tell what will be the shape of its leaf, the colour of the flower, and the size of its fruit; therefore we are not surprised when the little dark seed that we covered with earth sends up bright green leaves, and charms us with the softness of its blossom, or the sweetness of its scent. But is not the hand of God as much seen here as in any of the wonders of which we read in the Bible? And why, dear children, should we ever doubt the power of that Being who makes the sun to shine, and the earth to bring forth fruit in its season?

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## LETTER XXIII.

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SOON after this, Christ came to Bethsaida, where they brought to him a blind man. Jesus took him by the hand, led him out of the town, and cured him. He then sent him home, and told him neither to go into the town, nor tell it to any there. Although the people saw the works of Jesus, yet they were slow of heart to believe in his divine power. They did not all agree among themselves, as we find from the answer of the disciples, when asked by their Lord, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man, am?" They said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist, some say Elias, and others that thou art Jeremias, or that one of the old prophets is risen from the dead. Then said Jesus, "But whom say ye that I am?" Simon Peter answered and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!" and Jesus said unto him, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." Thus we

see that God put it into the hearts of those who were with him daily, and heard the words which he taught, and saw the wonders which he did among men, to own him as their Saviour; as Christ the Son of the living God. After this, Jesus began to shew to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things. He began to speak of his death, and told them he should be killed there; for that the chief priests and elders would put him to death; but that on the third day he should rise again. This must have been a great grief to them; for they seem to have loved him much. And Peter said, "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee."

It did not please Jesus to hear Peter speak thus; for he knew that all these things must come to pass. He knew that Peter spoke in the warmth of his heart; yet he thought fit to rebuke him, because his words shewed that his will was not quite given up to the will of God, whose good pleasure and mercy it was that this precious blood should be shed upon the cross. And Jesus turned and said unto Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men."

A few days after these sayings, Jesus took Peter, James, and John, his brother, up into a high mountain, apart by themselves. And as he prayed, his face became very much changed. It did shine as the sun, and his raiment became white as the light. And behold there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias,—who appeared in glory, and spake of his death, which should take place at Jerusalem. Thus was shown to the disciples, and to us also, that the dead shall indeed be raised to life and glory. For these two prophets were here seen in their state of bliss; and they spake face to face with him of whom they had written. You have seen how offended Peter was when he heard of the sufferings which Jesus should endure. It was a feeling common among the Jewish converts, that it would lessen the dignity of Christ to submit to these things.

When, therefore, Peter saw the glory which shone round his Divine Master, and heard him speaking with his redeemed servants, of the trials which should come upon him, it seems likely that he should think differently, and instead of feeling that any suffering could lessen the dignity of such a Being, his heart must have been filled with wonder and gratitude, that he,

to whom such a state of glory belonged, should condescend to bear any of the ills which man could lay upon him. Peter was so filled with joy at the sight, he so loved his Master, that he felt it would be a blessed thing to remain there always, and he said, "Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles,—one for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias." The Jews thought very highly of Moses. They looked upon him as their law-giver. And though Christ came to set them free from the law, and wished to write in their hearts a law of love instead, yet when the disciples saw Moses and Elias talking with Jesus, they might be still more ready to think that they were equal with him. But no sooner had Peter spoken, than a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: *hear ye him.*" When they heard the voice, they were afraid, and fell on their faces. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Arise, and be not afraid," When they lifted up their eyes, Jesus was there alone! The bright glory had passed away. Moses and Elias were gone. Christ their hope of glory was alone left to them. They were no longer



to look to Moses as their judge and father. Christ was to be their rule of life. The beloved Son of God, him they were to hear.

As they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, "Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead." And they kept that saying with themselves, asking one another what the rising from the dead should mean.

The next day, when they were come down from the hill, much people met him. As he came near his disciples, he saw a crowd standing round them; and when the people saw him coming, they ran to him. Jesus asked them what they were saying? when a man came out from the multitude, and, kneeling down to him, said, "Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatic, and sore vexed; for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water, and I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him." Then did Jesus rebuke the devil, and he went out of the child, and all the people were amazed at the mighty power of God.

When he was come into the house, his disciples came to him, and asked him, why they could not cast out the evil spirit. Their Lord

told them it was because they had not faith. So true it is, dear children, that without faith it is impossible to please God. If we attempt to do any thing in our own strength, we shall fail. But the humble Christian can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth us. While they abode in Galilee, the people wondered at all the things which Jesus did; and here he again spoke of his death to his disciples, which grieved them very much.

It was a custom among the Jews, that all who were above twenty years of age should pay something every half year to the temple, which money was spent for buying things needful to be used in the worship. When Jesus and his disciples came to Capernaum, they that received this money, which was called tribute, came to Peter, and said, "Doth not your Master pay tribute?" He saith, "Yes." When they were come into the house, Jesus asked him, "Of whom do the kings of the earth take custom, or tribute, of their own children, or of strangers?" Peter saith, "Of strangers." Jesus saith unto him, "Then are the children free." He meant to shew that if tribute was only paid by strangers, then he himself, the Son of the King of kings, to whom the temple was dedicated, had

no need to pay it. But we find the holy Jesus was so meek and lowly minded, that rather than offend against the laws and customs of the country, he quietly paid what was asked of him. He did not mix with those who were rich in this world's goods; therefore he had no money with which to satisfy them,—but told Peter to go to the sea, cast in his hook, and take up the first fish that came, in whose mouth he should find a piece of silver, which, he said, “Give unto them for thee and me.” I think, dear children, we may learn from this a useful lesson. It should teach us to comply cheerfully and readily with the wishes of those with whom we live, when there is nothing sinful in the things which they wish us to do. It is often better to yield than to stand up for our own rights,—and we may always be sure that we are right, when we follow the example of him, who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.

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## LETTER XXIV.

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THE example of our blessed Saviour at all times should teach us to be very humble, but we have also his own words to shew that those are the most pleasing in the sight of God who are gentle and forgiving. One day the disciples came to their Lord, and asked him, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Jesus said, "What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?" They held their peace, for they had disputed who should be the greatest. But there was no need for them to tell him, who knew all things. He saw the thought of their hearts, and said unto them, "If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all and servant of all." He then called a little child unto him; and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them, "Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Our Lord loves little children, but it was not the cross, passionate, froward child that he loved, the child

who would never be happy but when it had its own way, the child who was disobedient to its parents, or unkind to its brothers and sisters. No, dear children, it is the meek, gentle, teachable child, who is kind and affectionate to all, whom Christ wishes us to be like. "Whosoever shall humble himself as *this* little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

If we strive to be thus humble, we shall be ready to forgive any who may offend us, and then shew our love to God by obeying his commandments. For when Peter asked his Lord how many times he should forgive his brother who sinned against him, whether he should do so seven times? Jesus said, "I say not unto thee until seven times, but until seventy times seven." Christ in another place tells us, that we should love our enemies, bless them that curse us, do good to them that hate us, and pray for all who treat us unkindly. If we did this, how much more we should be like the children of God! If, instead of being ever ready to take offence, and make the worst of every little slight that was offered to us, we were willing to return good for evil, kindness for unkindness, how much happier we should be; and this is what we must try to do, dear

children, if we hope ~~that~~ God will forgive us our sins; for remember, ~~that~~ we pray to him to forgive our trespasses, ~~as~~ we forgive them who trespass against us.

Christ himself here teaches this lesson to his disciples by means of a parable. He tells them that the kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, who would take an account of his servants, and see how much they each owed him. One was brought unto him from whom was due the sum of ten thousand talents. The poor man had nothing to pay it with; therefore his lord commanded him to be sold, with his wife and children, and all that he had. Among the Jews, persons had this power over those who owed them money, and they were then paid out of the sum thus raised. The servant, when he found what would happen to him, fell down at his master's feet, saying, "Lord, have patience, and I will pay thee all." Then the lord of that servant had compassion, set him free, and forgave him the debt.

Would you not have felt very grateful for this act of mercy? and should you not think that this man would have been ready to shew the same compassion to others, that he had met with himself; that as his trespasses had been forgiven,

he would gladly have forgiven the trespasses of others. But, no; he went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, who owed him an hundred pence; and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, "Pay me that thou owest." The poor man fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, "Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all!" and he would not, though his own larger debt had been forgiven; but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt! So, when his fellow-servants saw this, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord called him, and said unto him, "Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?" And his lord was wroth, and gave him to the tormentors till he should pay all his debt.

Now, dear children, I am sure you all feel that it was very mean and wicked in this servant, after he had been forgiven all his large debt by his kind master, to throw his fellow-servant into prison for a like cause. It was, indeed, very ungrateful; and we cannot think meanly of such conduct. But do we

not, in thinking thus, condemn ourselves? How ready and willing is God to pardon us for the many sins which we commit daily! do not think, I beseech you, that because you may be very young, you have done nothing to be forgiven; nothing for which you need ask the mercy of God. For every evil thought, every idle word, we shall be brought to account in the day of judgment, as surely as this hard-hearted servant had to account for his ten thousand talents. But all these things will God forgive us, for the sake of his dear Son, if we have made him our friend! Should we not, then, be very glad to forgive our neighbour any little evil he may have committed against us? For, even if his offence has been great, he cannot so much have offended us, as we have sinned against our Father in heaven. The lord of this servant had just cause to be angry with one whom he had forgiven so much. "So likewise (said Jesus) shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."

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## LETTER XXV.

You know that the Saviour had chosen twelve men as his disciples, to be with him wherever he went. And at this time he sent out seventy others, who were to go two and two before him, into every city and place, to teach and to preach in his name. They were to heal the sick, and to do all those acts of love which they had learned from the example of their Divine Master.

He then sent the twelve to a feast which was to be held at Jerusalem; Jesus himself went in secret, and did not shew himself to the people at first,—for there was much talk of him. Some said that he was a good man; others, that he deceived the people. Once or twice he was graciously pleased to come into the temple, where many, when they heard his words, believed on him; others would have taken him up. But the officers, whom the chief priests and people had sent for that purpose, said, “Never man spake like this man.”

Dear children, when you hear of people who have been very wicked, who have taken what does not belong to them, or have not told the truth, or who may even have been so very wicked as to kill a fellow-creature, do you not feel in your hearts that you are a great deal better than they are? And, instead of feeling pity and sorrow for them, do you not despise, and almost hate them? But I am going to shew you that our blessed Saviour did not feel thus. And remember, that if we are really led and taught by his Spirit, we shall learn more and more to act like him.

One morning early, when Jesus was sitting in the temple teaching the people, the Scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman who had been guilty of a crime which the Jews punished with death. But they were not sorry for her. They did not pity her, and bring her to Jesus, that he might teach her how sinful she had been, and pardon her. Oh, no; they were proud and hard-hearted. They cared nothing about the woman or her sin. But they wished to make the people dislike Jesus; and they thought that if he condemned her to die, the Romans would be angry; and if he spared her life, they knew the people would think he had

broken the law of Moses. They did not remember that they were speaking to him who had given the law to Moses, but said, "Moses commanded that such should be stoned: what sayest thou?"

Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground as though he heard them not. They still kept on asking. At length he lifted up himself, and said unto them, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." They were not prepared for this. Highly as they thought of themselves, the voice of conscience would be heard; and not one of them dared take up the stone. They went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, and left Jesus alone with the woman. When he had lifted up himself, and saw none of them, he said, "Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?" She said, "No man, Lord." And Jesus said unto her, "Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more."

Now, we cannot for a moment think that the pure and holy Jesus did not feel the guilt of this poor woman much more strongly than her sinful accusers. Yet they had been ready and willing to make the most of it. But, perhaps, he who knows what is in man, saw that she was

sorry for what she had done; and her sin was not more displeasing in the sight of Jesus than the secret sins of those proud men who had brought her before him. Let us, then, dear children, instead of thinking harshly of others who may seem to be more wicked than we are willing to think ourselves, search our own hearts; and we shall soon feel that it is of God's mercy that we have been kept from falling.

The seventy disciples who had been sent out by Jesus came back to him again with great joy; for they found themselves able to do all things in his name: for at the name of Jesus even the devils were subject unto them. Then did their Lord give them power over the enemy, telling them, "nothing shall by any means hurt you." No, dear children, nothing shall harm you if ye be followers of that which is good. If you indeed love God, and put your trust in him, he loves you, and will take greater care of you than the tenderest parent could of an only child; because he so well knows what we each stand in need of. Do you know what I mean when I tell you to *put your trust in God*? You feel quite sure, dear child, that your kind parents would not let any danger come near you that they could help; therefore,

you feel quite safe when they are with you. And those who love God feel that he is ever near them to keep them from evil. It was thus that king David, felt, when he said, in one of his beautiful psalms, "I will both lay me down and sleep; for thou, Lord, only makest me to dwell in safety."

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## LETTER XXVI.

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OUR Lord spake another parable at this time to the people, to shew that they should be kind to one another, and love even those who might be their enemies.

A certain lawyer came up to Jesus, and asked him—what he should do to inherit eternal life? This question does not appear to have been put in an humble, earnest way, as if it had been the simple wish of his heart to be taught what he should do to be most pleasing to God. For there were those who, while the meek and holy Jesus was leading a life of pain and trial upon earth for their sakes, did not love to follow him, and listen to the words of his mouth, that they might learn to love him and be like him. But they thought him a weak man like themselves. They did not see in him that wisdom from on high, which made him “gentle and easy to be entreated,” and willing to bear with their scorn, and ready to answer all their questions. And they were wicked and foolish enough sometimes to think they could tempt and puzzle him by

these questions, or at all events make the people angry with his answers. But he knew all their thoughts.

Never, dear children, did our blessed Saviour turn a deaf ear to those who sought his help with a humble heart. And even in the case of this lawyer, he did not turn from him, and refuse to hear him,—but asked him if he knew what was written in the law! “And he answering, said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself.” Jesus said, “Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.” But this man seemed to think very highly of himself, as if he had kept the law. The Jews were the only people that he called his neighbours; and he thought that he had done his duty to them. For he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, “And who is my neighbour?” Then did Jesus speak unto him a sweet and touching parable, from which, dear children, we may learn that we should love, and try in all ways in our power to do good to all men, of whatever nation, or kindred, or tongue, or people. For, remember, we shall all meet before the judgment-seat of Christ, by whose

love alone we can hope to be saved. Thus, when you see among strangers, a poor man from a distant land, who does not seem to have any friends about him, to care for him—a poor negro, for instance—think of him kindly, and if you can do him any good, or shew him any little kindness, be as a neighbour unto him, for the sake of that Saviour who died as much for him as for you. But you shall hear what our Lord told the lawyer.

“A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and by the way he fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothes, and wounded him, and then went away, leaving him in the road half dead. And, by chance, there came down a priest that way, who, though he saw the poor man lying there, took no notice of him, but passed by on the other side. After this came a Levite,—who looked on him; but he also passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion on him. He did not pass on the other side, but went to him, bound up his wounds, set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow, when he went away, he



took out some money, and gave to the host, saying, "Take care of him, and what thou spendest more, when I come again I will repay thee." "Which of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among thieves?" And he said, "He that shewed mercy upon him." Then said Jesus, "Go, and do thou likewise."

Now it came to pass, as they went, that Christ came to a village where a woman named Martha lived, to whose house he went. She had a sister named Mary, who, when Jesus came, seated herself at his feet, that she might not lose any of the words that he should speak. Martha seems to have been very anxious to make her house fit for so noble a guest, and she did not think it was right in Mary to leave every thing for her to do; for she came to Jesus and said, "Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me." "And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." Our Lord did not mean by this that we should neglect those duties

which we all have to perform, but that we should not let them take up too much of our time and thoughts. Thus it is very right and proper in you to take pains and learn all that your kind parents or teachers may wish you to do. Yet you should not let either lessons or play take up *all* your thoughts, so as to leave *no* time to think of the great God to whom you owe all the blessings of your life, who made you, whose you are, and whom you ought to serve. The Bible says, "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth." Think of him as the good and wise Being who is to lead and guide you as you grow up, who will bless you, if you love to sit as at his footstool, and listen to the words and good thoughts which he will put into your heart; if, like Mary, you should wish to choose that good part which cannot be taken away from you. Dear children, you may lose all your earthly friends, you may lose the home where you have been so happy, you may be thrown upon the wide world without a place wherein to lay your head; but if you have God for your friend, if you have chosen to follow the blessed commands of our Saviour, you will still have *the one thing needful*, which cannot be taken from you.

It is very possible also to perform all our duties to others very well, and yet not to have our hearts right before God. We may try to act rightly in order to gain the praise of men, and not because we wish to please God. But this the Bible tells us will not do. I have told you before how very particular the Jews were about washing themselves, at all times, and particularly before eating; and we find our Saviour sitting down to meat in the house of a Pharisee with unwashed hands, at which the Pharisee was very much surprised; but the Lord said unto him, "Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of wickedness." Thus at once shewing us, that we may appear to men to be very good, we may seem to perform very good actions, but unless the feeling of our hearts is pure in the sight of God, we cannot please him.

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## LETTER XXVII.

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I HOPE as you grow older you will love more and more to read in that good and wise book which God has given us as the rule of our lives. For not only may we learn what is right from reading about our Saviour's actions, and seeing there the things which he did, but he taught the people as no man ever taught, before or since, and the words which he used were so plain and simple, that all who read aright may understand them. In one place he tells us how wrong it is to be covetous, to seek to get more things than we can want or use, merely for the sake of having them.

In order that the people might quite know what he meant, he spake a parable to the multitude, saying, "The ground of a certain rich man brought forth much fruit, and he thought within himself, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? and he said, this will I do; I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods." This might not

have been wrong: God had blessed his labours, so that the ground was very fruitful, and it was right in him to take care that these gifts of a good and bountiful Father were not wasted. But he did not stop here, and thank God as the giver of all this plenty, and strive to shew by kindness to his poorer neighbours his gratitude for such blessings. But he seems to have forgotten him from whom they came, for he said to himself, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." But God said unto him, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?" So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

Jesus then told his disciples to think of the ravens, which neither sow nor reap: they have neither storehouse nor barn; yet God feedeth them! He told them also to look at the beautiful lily, how it grows, and becomes clothed with beauty; yet it toils not, it spins not: God takes care of it. And so lovely is it, that Solomon in all his glory was not so beautifully clad. Surely then, dear children, if our Father in heaven takes care of the grass of the field, that the dew

and rain should feed and cause it to put forth its tender sprouts in its season, he will also take care that the creatures whom he has made to serve and praise him shall want for nothing. And we have the promise of him who cannot lie, that if we seek *first* the kingdom of God, all that we need shall be added thereto.

You will find, the more you read the word of God, that the best men have been those who have thought the least of this present life. For this is not to be our home for many years, and we are only placed here that we may learn the will of God, and be made fit to serve him in heaven; and we know not how soon we may be called to leave this world. Therefore our Lord has told us to watch, that we may be ready, for he said, Blessed are those servants, whom when their Lord cometh he shall find watching. And if the good man of the house had known at what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, that his house might not be broken into. "Be ye therefore also ready, for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not!"

Though these words were spoken to those who were standing by at the time, yet they are also written for our learning: and have you not known children young as yourselves to die?

Now let me ask you one question. Do you love the Lord Jesus? Are you ready to die, and go to him? If you love him, and he is your friend, this thought will not make you unhappy. But if you give way to your angry passions, and feel as if you did not love one who was so gentle and lowly, pray to him when you are alone, that he will teach you to love him. He is very patient with sinners, as we may learn from this parable which he spake.

A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard, but it bore no fruit, so that, when he came to look at it, hoping to gather some, he found none. Then said he, to the dresser of the vineyard, "Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none. Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?"

You see, dear children, the tree was of no use. It had been planted there that it might bear fruit. And of course, when the master came year after year, and found none upon it, he gave orders that it should be cut down. Now we may call this world a large vineyard, and you may think of yourself as a fig-tree planted in it. For as the tree was planted to please its master by giving him fruit, so you have been placed here to do your Master's will.

And he has put his good Spirit into your heart, to shew you how to do right. Now, do you listen to this voice in your heart? Do you try to get the better of your evil tempers? Do you wish to love God, to be kind and gentle to those around you, and in all things strive to shew that you wish to be a disciple of Christ? Or do you seek merely to please yourself, and give way to unkind and selfish feelings, never happy but when every one yields to your wishes, nor even then, because a selfish child is always wishing for what it cannot have. If you indulge these feelings you cannot please God, you can do nothing for his glory, and you are like the barren fig-tree, which was of no use in the garden, but was sentenced to be cut down! And was it cut down? was there no kind friend at hand to beg that it might be spared a little longer? to see whether it would not at last bear some fruit! Oh, yes, for the vinedresser said, "Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: and if it bear fruit, well; and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down."

Now this merciful vinedresser may be compared to our blessed Saviour, who thus pleads for each of us with God, who is so holy, that it



is just and right in him to punish us for our sins, but for the sake of Christ Jesus our Lord, who loves us, and died for us, he bears with us when we do wrong, and pardons all our daily sins, if we will but feel and confess them. Oh, surely this should make us love him, and if we love him, we shall seek to please him. Dear children! how unhappy will it be for us if we do not; for though he is very merciful and slow to anger, he is also very just; and if we will forget him from day to day, and take no pleasure in serving him, we shall surely be punished at last. For remember, that the vine-dresser who was so very merciful, so loath to cut down the barren tree, said, that if, after he had digged about it and given it time, it should then bear no fruit, "then after that thou shalt cut it down."

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## LETTER XXVIII.

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OUR Saviour went up to Jerusalem at this time, where he saw a man who had been blind from his birth. The disciples seem to have thought that this affliction must have been meant as a punishment for sin; for they said to Jesus, "Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" But Jesus said, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him."

Then did Jesus spit upon the ground, and make clay of the spittle, which he put upon the eyes of the blind man, and sent him to wash in the pool of Siloam; and, when he had done so, he came back seeing. Then those who had known him before were very much surprised, and said, "Is not this he that sat and begged?" Some said it was, others said, "It is like him." But he put an end to their doubts, by saying, "I am he."

They then asked him how his eyes were opened? For so great a miracle as that of

giving sight to one born blind had never been done by any of their prophets, and was looked upon by the Jews as a sign of him who was to be the Saviour of the world. The man said, "A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, 'Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash:' I went, and washed, and received sight." His neighbours then asked if he knew where Jesus was; which he did not. They then took him before the Pharisees.

Now the day on which Jesus had given sight to this poor man was the Sabbath. And when the Pharisees had heard from his lips the same simple story that he had before told, some of them said that Jesus could not be of God, because he did these things on the Sabbath-day; forgetting that he had taught them that it was lawful to do good on that day. Yet some of them thought that if he had been a sinner he could not have done such a miracle. Thus, they did not agree among themselves, and they asked him that had been blind, "What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes?" They would not even believe that the young man had been born blind, till they called his parents, and asked them, saying, "Is this your son, who

ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see? His parents said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: but by what means he now seeth we know not, or who hath opened his eyes we know not; he is of age, ask him: he shall speak for himself."

These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews, who had said that if any man did confess that Jesus was the Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue; so much did they harden their hearts, and refuse to own *him* as their Saviour, who did daily before their eyes so many wonderful things. But he who had passed so many years of his life in a helpless, blind state, felt too grateful for the blessing of sight which had been given to him, to let fear have any effect on him. And when the Pharisees told him to "give God the praise, for we know this man is a sinner," his answer was, "Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." And when they had heard all he had to say, they treated him with great scorn. But they could not make him deny the power of him to whom he owed so much. He told them it was very strange that they should not see that he who had opened his eyes could not

have been a sinner, because God would not have given such power to a sinful man; "for since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind." Then were they very angry, and cast him out of the synagogue.

But our God is always near to help those who are in trouble; and he is pleased to behold with pity the sorrows of his servants. Jesus heard that the Jews had cast him out, and when he had found him, he said unto him, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" He said, "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?" And Jesus said unto him, "Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee." And he said, "Lord, I believe: and he worshipped him."

Thus was our blessed Lord not only pleased to give sight to this poor man, that he might behold the bright light of day, see the faces of those friends among whom he dwelt, and learn to praise God "for all the blessings of the light;" but he also cured the blindness of his heart, and shewed him how he might obtain eternal life. He made himself known to him as the Son of God, by whom alone we can come to the Father; as we may also learn from a

parable which Jesus spake at this time to the Pharisees, in which he calls himself the door of the sheepfold, "by which if any man enter in, he shall be saved."

He also, here, calls himself the Good Shepherd. And those who are gentle and obedient, and listen to his voice, he will take care of as the sheep of his fold, for whom the Good Shepherd would give his life rather than any evil should happen to them. But he who is not the true Shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, will flee when he sees the wolf coming, and will leave the helpless flock to be killed by their foe. But, said our Lord, "I am the Good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep; and other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd."

Yes, dear children, "there shall be one fold," in which all who have sought to serve God, and to have their hearts made clean by the blood of the Lamb, shall dwell in safety. There shall we meet all our dear friends, whom it may have pleased God to take to himself. There will be

no more parting there, nor any sorrow. For the Good Shepherd who laid down his life for the sheep, will dwell among his flock, and wipe away all tears from their eyes.

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## LETTER XXIX.

WHEN the Pharisees saw how the publicans and sinners followed after our Saviour to hear the simple truths which he taught the people, they murmured at him because he did not turn away from them as they would have done. They did not feel the sin that was deep hid in their own hearts ; and little thought that the pride, which made them think of themselves more highly than they ought to think, was as ugly in the sight of God as the more open sin of the poor publican.

Let us look into our own hearts, and we shall find sinful thoughts much more apt to come into our minds than good ones ; until we are taught to hate sin by the Spirit of God. You, dear children, may think yourselves very much better than those who tell lies and steal, or fight with their play-fellows, or disobey their parents ; but, perhaps, you are not tempted to do these things ; you do not want to steal, because your friends give you every thing you need ; you love your play-fellows, and have been



taught that it is wrong to quarrel with them :  
 you love your parents, and generally mind what  
 they say to you,

“Not more than others you deserve,

But God has given you more.”

And can you say that if you had been a poor neglected child, with no kind friend to teach you that it was wrong to steal or fight, that you might not have been as bad as the poor child not older than yourself who is sent to prison for stealing bread when he was hungry? If you had been in his place, you would have done the same, unless you do the *sin* which he has done, *because God hates it*. But then you should not hate the poor sinner, you should pity and pray for him. As Jesus Christ himself taught us, in a parable which he spake to the Pharisees, when they murmured because he taught the sinners who came to him.

Jesus said, “What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost until he find it?”

Here our Saviour compares the poor sinner who has gone very far from the right way, who would not rest in the fold of Christ, nor listen to the voice of conscience, (which is the voice

of our heavenly Shepherd,) to a poor lost sheep, who would not be content to stop in the safe and pleasant fold, which had been made for the whole flock by the kind Shepherd, but foolishly strayed away.

What does Christ tell us the shepherd did? Did he say how very wrong and silly of that sheep to stray from the fold, which I had taken the pains to get ready for my flock, in order that the fierce beasts might not hurt them, nor any harm happen to them? As he did not choose to stay, I shall leave him to his fate, and most likely he will die of thirst in the wilderness, or perhaps some wild beast may tear him to pieces. No, he did not say this—you see what he said,—“he went after the sheep which was lost,”—and did not return “*till he had found it.*” And when he had found it, perhaps ready to die with fatigue and thirst, its feet weary and hurt with the sand and stones of the dreary wilderness; the Good Shepherd did not *drive* it back again to the fold. But we read that he took it in his arms, and laid it upon his shoulders, *rejoicing*. Yes, instead of being angry with the sheep, he was *glad* when he had found it, and brought it safe back. And when he got home, he called together his friends and

neighbours, saying unto them, "Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost."

Now, dear children, does not all this tell us of the love of Christ, the Good Shepherd, to the poor sinner, who has foolishly and wickedly strayed from him? We may here see how Christ puts his good Spirit into our hearts, to drive away our sinful thoughts, and bring us back to himself. And if we will but listen to that still voice in our hearts, and obey it, Christ will not punish us for all our former disobedience to him,—but will forgive us all we have ever done amiss, and rejoice at our return to his fold.

He tells us in another place, that he is the Good Shepherd, and the Good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep, and he has given his life for us, dear children; he has suffered death upon the cross as the punishment of our sins, that we might be brought back to his fold. Oh, let us then follow him, for he has said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."

Our Lord also spake another parable unto them, saying, "Either what woman, having ten

pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it. And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost."

In this parable, as in the other, our Saviour shews us his love to sinful man. And we should love him, dear children! for he has a right to us. The poor woman had, perhaps, worked hard to earn the pieces of silver. But Christ has suffered death for our sins, that we might be forgiven for his sake, and become the children of God. She rejoiced with her friends and neighbours, when she had found her money; so does our Good Shepherd rejoice when we listen to his voice and follow him.

Can it be right then, dear children, to feel anger, and hatred, and contempt for the poor sinner, when perhaps he may be some lost sheep, whom Jesus Christ may graciously intend to call back to his fold,—and at whose repentance there would be joy in heaven, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance.

If one of your little brothers was very ill, so ill that you thought he must die, and be taken

from you; how sad you would feel when you thought how you should miss his happy face and his merry voice, and no longer have him to play with, and love you. Would you not pray to God, if he saw it right, to spare your dear brother a little longer to you? And if he thought fit to hear your prayer, would not your heart be very glad! and would you not feel more joy about your brother that had thus been given back to you, than about all your other brothers and sisters whom you had not been afraid of losing? and this is why,—when God gives us grace to repent, and for Christ's sake pardons our sins, “there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over every sinner that repenteth.”

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LETTER XXX.

THE two parables which I have just set before you, were given by our blessed Lord, to shew us how needful it is that our hearts should be changed. And we saw, under the likeness of a poor lost sheep, the helplessness of the sinner when he strays from God. Jesus Christ then gave a most beautiful parable, in which he shewed the love and mercy of our heavenly Father, in graciously receiving those who truly repent of their sins.

Do you know what it is *to repent*, dear children? It means, to be very sorry for our sin, to hate our sin; and when by the grace of God we repent, we have a feeling in our hearts, which makes us *afraid* to say or do any thing that we know God would not like. This is that *fear of God*, which Solomon said was the beginning of wisdom; and then we not only fear him, but we learn to love him who is so good, and when we do this we wish to be like him. So that you see we do not *truly repent*, unless we *leave off* our sins of pride, or passion, or disobedience, or whatever they may be.

You will see in the parable I am going to relate to you of "the prodigal son," how he repented of his sin, and how graciously his father took him home again. Jesus said, "A certain man had two sons; and the younger of them said to his father, Give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living." This young man was not willing to stay any longer with his kind parents. He forgot all the care they had taken of him before he was able to do any thing for himself, all the love they had shewn to him when a child, and now he wished to leave them, because he could not do just as he liked. His father loved him, and perhaps corrected him when he did wrong, and so he thought he should be much happier if he were away. He forgot that he could never meet with any other persons who would love him and take care of him as they had done.

Do you not think this young man was very undutiful to his parents, dear children? very ungrateful to them for all their love? And so is the sinner to his God. Our heavenly Father has given us all the blessings we enjoy. He has taken care of us, and kept us in the midst of many dangers ever since we were born. Yet

we do not love him as we ought. We will not give our hearts to him, and say, "My Father, thou art the guide of my youth." But instead of loving to walk in the strait and narrow way which our Saviour tells us leads to God, we like best to walk in the broad road, like the poor prodigal, who, when his father had given him his goods, gathered them all together, and took his journey into a *far country*. He went far away from his father's house, and wasted his substance in riotous living. Do you know what Christ means, dear children, when he speaks of the broad road that leads to hell, and the narrow way that leads to heaven? I will try, by God's help, to tell you.

Do you not often feel as if you had two minds in you? One mind leads you to love and obey God, and your parents and friends, to be kind, and gentle, and forgiving to your brothers and sisters; the other tempts you to be disobedient, cross, and peevish. The good mind makes you feel willing to give up your own will in any thing, if by so doing you can make those around you more happy. The bad mind makes you think more of yourself than of any one else—makes you proud and self-willed. It is God who sends the Spirit into your heart, that puts



the good mind into you. And when you obey this Spirit, Christ calls it the *narrow way*, because it does not seem so easy to us at first as walking in the *broad way*, which way we certainly take whenever we disobey God and our parents, and are led away by our evil passions.

But suppose you were far away from your own home, and that between you and it there was a river to cross, and only a narrow plank by which to get over it in one place, and a broad bridge across another part of it, would you not feel inclined to go over the bridge? But if a friend, who you knew would not deceive you, or tell you wrong, were to come and say, You had better go over the strait and narrow plank, because it will take you to your father's house, and the bridge, though it looks pleasanter, and seems to go the same way, will lead you into a far country. You need not fear, for I will go over with you and hold your hand all the time, and will not leave you till you are safely over. Now, if you knew and loved this friend, would you not at once trust yourself to his care, and follow in his steps? Thus does our Saviour lead and guide in the narrow way all that pray to him for help.

But to return to the prodigal, who was wasting

his goods in a far country; "when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land, and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled himself with the husks that the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger?" While he was in that kind father's house, he had never known want; and now, that he was ready to perish with hunger, he began to think how he had been loved and taken care of there; and he said, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants."

Dear children, if you have disobeyed your kind parents, and begin to feel sorry for it, do not you long to tell them that you feel you have done wrong, and beg their forgiveness? So it is when we have offended God. As soon as we really repent of our sin, we shall go to him and confess it. We shall also feel very humble, and

think very little of ourselves, and feel that we are not worthy to be called his children; still we shall resolve, as the prodigal did, to arise and go to our Father. And how did his father receive him? Did he tell him that he was so angry with him for going away, that he would not take him back again? No, he saw that he was sorry for his sin, and he did not even wait to be told so, but "when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." You see his father's love and kindness in taking him back so freely did not make him think little of his sin, and forget how wicked he had been, but made him the more ready and willing to confess his sin. "Then the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found. And they began to be merry."

I told you that our Lord seems to have spoken this parable, to shew the love of our

heavenly Father in pardoning the repentant sinner. We have seen how the father of this poor prodigal took him again to his heart, though he had spent all. He had nothing to bring his father back of all that he had taken out with him. So does our God pardon us, dear children, if we will forsake our sins and come to him. He will even shew us how to come back to him. As the shepherd brought back the lost sheep into the fold, so will our Saviour bring us back to God. And remember, dear children, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over every sinner that repenteth. So if we wish to be like these holy and happy beings, we also shall rejoice, when we see any of our disobedient companions become good and gentle, and not feel envious of them when we see them forgiven and kindly treated.

The brother of the poor prodigal was envious, when his father rejoiced so much at the wanderer's return, and, instead of feeling glad that his brother had left off his evil ways, and joining in the feast which his father made on the occasion, he called to one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. When he found that the rejoicing was on account of the return of

his brother, he was angry, and would not go in. Then his father came out, and entreated him. But he answering, said, "Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment; and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: but as soon as this thy son was come, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf." And he said, "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad; for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."

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## LETTER XXXI.

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OUR Saviour loved little children; and there were some parents who gladly brought their little ones to Christ, that he might put his hands on them, and pray. "But his disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God."

Perhaps you wish you had been alive then, that you might have been brought to Christ, and blessed by him. You think if this had been your case, how good you would have been ever after. When you felt tempted to be cross or passionate, you would have thought to yourself, No, I must not give way to bad thoughts and angry passions, for the blessed Saviour has laid his hands upon my head and blessed me, and I must try and be his disciple! It is true that Christ does not now dwell upon the earth in the form of a man, but you have often been told that God is every where, in all places at the same time, although you cannot see him, because he is a spirit. He is so vast that he fills the whole

world; yet he dwells in each of our hearts, and knows even the smallest thought which we think. When Christ Jesus took our nature upon him, and was suffering on the earth the punishment of our sins, he was also God in heaven. And now that we see him not, and he reigns above, he is yet near every one of us; and he has promised to be so to the end of the world

You were taken to him, dear children, when you were little helpless infants. And your parents prayed that Christ would receive you into his fold, and the minister of Christ blessed you in the name of his Master. And not only at the time of your baptism, but every day of your lives, do your pious parents pray to Him who loves little children, that he will give you his blessing, and that you may become good, and your hearts made clean and pleasing in his sight. And think what will be their joy, when they see that they have not taken you in vain to the Saviour, but that you are humbly trying to be his disciples; for nothing else can make you happy. If you love God, you will be contented, and cheerful, and light-hearted; but if you do not love him, though you had every good thing you could desire, yet you would not be happy.

I will relate to you a parable which our Lord spake, about a rich man who did not love and serve God, and a poor man who did, and you shall see which was best off at the last. There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and he lived in a fine house, and had a great plenty to eat and drink every day; and had every thing he could wish for in this life. And there was a poor beggar named Lazarus, laid at the rich man's gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from his table. It does not seem that the rich man took much notice of him: he did not indeed send him away; neither, we may suppose, did he refuse him the crumbs which fell from his table. But he did not clothe him, nor dress his sores. It was plain he thought more about his own pleasures than the comfort of the poor beggar who lay at his gate. This would not have been the case if he had loved God; but the love of God was not in him, and so he did not love his neighbour. Christ says, "By this shall every man know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." But the poor man still lay at the rich man's gate, and the dogs came and licked his sores.



It came to pass that the beggar died, and the poor, wretched, but patient sufferer was carried by the angels into heaven, into Abraham's bosom. It had been the will of God that he should suffer in this world; but it was not because of his sufferings here that he was made so hereafter. Oh, no; for we all deserve punishment for our sins much more than God in his mercy sees fit to lay upon us. But Lazarus had been patient, and humble, and honest in the sight of God, who knew his heart; and for Jesus Christ's sake he had mercy upon him, and took him away from his trials here. But, dear children, the rich man also died. He had to leave his great house, and all his wealth, and all his friends, who had feasted with him every day. And did the angels carry *him* to heaven? No, dreadful was his doom; for he lifted up his eyes in *hell*, being in torments; and afar off he saw one who in his lifetime had been poor, and sick, and despised—he saw Lazarus in Abraham's bosom. And he cried and said, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame." But Abraham said, "Son, remember" that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good

things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; now he is comforted, and thou art tormented."

The rich man was not sent to hell *because* he had had his good things in his lifetime, but *because* he had *not made a good use of them*. He had made great feasts for his friends, perhaps for those who did not need it; but he had forgotten the poor man, who had no food and raiment. Neither was Lazarus carried into heaven *because* he had been poor and sick in his lifetime, but *because* he had made a good use of his trials. They had most likely made him trust in God; he knew that he had no earthly friend to help him, therefore we may suppose that he prayed to God, *for* Christ's sake to have pity upon. And he seems to have been humble and very patient under God's hand.

I need not ask you, whether you had rather be the poor man who loved God, or the rich man who did not love him, now you have seen the end of both. But it is *now* that you must try to love and serve God, because it will be too late when you are called from this world. For our Lord shews us in this parable the great distance there will then be between the good and wicked, between those who served God,

and those who served him not. Abraham told the rich man, "there is between us and you a great gulf fixed, so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us that would come from thence." When the rich man found that even a drop of water was denied him, to cool his parched tongue, he seems to have thought over his past life. But it was too late to repent. He then thought of his brothers, whom he had left behind, and he begged that Lazarus might be sent to his father's house to warn them. Abraham told him that they had the holy scriptures, the word of God, written by Moses and the prophets, which they were to make the rule of their lives. And he said, "Nay, father Abraham, but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent." Perhaps he remembered, that when he was with them he had not read his Bible, and he knew that they also neglected to do it. But, dear children, it is by reading this blessed book that we shall find what is the will of God, and if we neglect this great duty, we should not (as Abraham told the rich man) be persuaded to serve God, though one rose from the dead.

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## LETTER XXXII.

Do you not think that the people should have felt very grateful to Jesus for all the good he was always doing whilst he was with them? But, alas! we often see people very ungrateful to their best friends; and it was the case at that time. For we read that once when our Lord was going to Jerusalem, as he passed through a village, by the way he was met by ten men, who were lepers. They stood afar off, and lifted up their voices, and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy upon us!" and when Jesus saw them, he said, "Go, shew yourselves unto the priest."

God had commanded the Jews, in the law of Moses, that when they found themselves suffering from this dreadful disorder, they were to shew themselves to the priest; and if he declared it to be leprosy, they were to be kept apart from the rest of the people for some days. They were then to come before him again; and when he thought it cured, he sprinkled them to make them clean, as God had commanded, and

they made their offering. This was why our Lord now told them to "Go, and shew themselves to the priest."

They went, and as they walked along they found themselves clean. The power of God's word had sent away their dreadful disease. How glad they must have been! Do you not think they would all gladly go, and thank Jesus for what he had done? But, no; *only one* of the ten, "when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face, at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan." And Jesus said, "Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? there are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger." All the ten were cured of their leprosy, dear children; but there is a yet more dreadful disease, which we all have in our hearts, and that is *sin*. This disease none can cure but our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore let us seek him, and believe in him, as this poor Samaritan did. Then, instead of being strangers any longer to God, we shall be brought nigh to him by the blood of Christ.

As there is nothing more displeasing to God than a haughty, proud heart, so there is nothing

that he loves better than a humble one. These are the words of God, "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." One day, when our Lord was with some persons who seemed to think themselves very good, much better than any one else, he spake a parable unto them; the parable of the publican and pharisee.

I have told you before, who the pharisees were. But lest you should forget, I will remind you—that they were proud men, who professed to be very good, but were like those persons of whom Christ speaks as drawing near to him with their lips, while their hearts are far from him. We are like them also, dear children, when we pretend to be praying to God, but are thinking of something else all the while; and when we think much of any little kindness that we may have been able to shew to any one, and think ourselves very good because of it. The publicans were people who collected the taxes which the Jews paid to the Romans. Many of them led very bad lives; and very few persons would even be seen with them, they were so meanly thought of. But we will hope there were some among them who had repented of

their sins, we may indeed learn this from our Lord's parable.

"Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, the other a Publican." The Pharisee did not come before God to confess his sins, and to pray for a humble and penitent heart. No; he did not feel that there was much sin in him. He did not know his own heart; but he thanked God, that he was not "as other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican." He also boasted of his good deeds, saying that he fasted twice in the week, and gave away part of all that he had. You see he thought very much of himself, and very meanly of the poor publican,—and thanked God that he was not like him. But do you know, dear children, he might indeed have thanked God, if he had been more like him; for that poor man was a true penitent. He had a broken and contrite heart,—and such king David tells us, in the fifty-first psalm, that God will not despise. So sinful did the publican think himself, that he stood afar off, and would not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven; but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. You may know which of these two men God loved

best to look upon for Jesus said, "Every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted."

One day there came to Jesus a young ruler, who kneeling to him said, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" Our Lord said, "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God!" He who knew the thoughts of all, and what was in man, saw that the young man before him did not come to him as to a Saviour, who was to take away his sin, but that he had most likely heard of some of the things which Jesus had done, and thought of him merely as a good *man*. Christ also knew that the young ruler was well pleased with himself, and did not think himself a sinner in the sight of the holy God. Therefore he would not let him call him good; because he wished him to know that *all men* are sinful in the sight of him with whom we have to do. Our Saviour, however, answered his question, and told him that if he would enter into life, he must keep the commandments. The young man asked, which? Jesus repeated some of them to him, when he said, "All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?"



He had not attended to the sermon on the mount, dear children, where our Saviour spoke of the commandments, and applied them to the very thoughts of our hearts, or he would not have said that he had kept them all; for our Lord there taught us that he who indulged an angry thought against his brother broke the commandment which said, "Thou shalt not kill." For it is from angry thoughts that we get to angry words; and if a man did not first hate his brother, he would not kill him.

When Jesus heard what the young man said, he looked upon him, and we read that he loved him. For it is not his wish that any should perish, dear children, but that we should all come unto him. And, perhaps, our blessed Saviour saw that he was one of those stray sheep who would one day be brought back to his fold. But to shew him at once that his heart was not right with God, and that he had not in spirit and in truth kept the commandments, Jesus said, Yet lackest thou one thing; if thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." "But when the young man heard that saying, he went away very sorrowful; for he had great possessions."

You see, dear children, this young man thought he loved God; but when Christ shewed him what was in his heart, we find that he could not bring himself to part with his treasures for the sake of that neighbour, whom he had thought he loved as himself. Very likely, if he had been told to do some great thing, he would have done it. But when he was sent to do good quietly among his neighbours, and those who were in need, he did not obey. Perhaps you, my dear child, are thinking that if Christ had told you to do any thing, you would gladly have shewed your love to him by obeying him. Then ask of him grace to enable you to do so; for he has told you many things which you may do. He has commanded you to honour your father and mother, to be gentle and kind, to speak the truth, because God says that he hates lying lips,—to be humble and diligent; and if you wish to know what more you may do to please him, you will find it in that blessed book, the Bible, which God put into the hearts of his servants to write, that we might make it the rule of our lives; and when you read, pray to Jesus Christ for his Spirit, which can alone make you understand that which will make you wise unto salvation. ••

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## LETTER XXXIII.

THE reason of our being born into this world is, that we may learn to employ the powers of body and mind, which God has given us, in his service; not that the great God needs any service that ~~we~~ we can give him, for there are the pure and holy angels, who wait to do his bidding. We are sinful creatures; but God loves us, and will wash away our sins in the blood of his Son, and permits us to love and serve him. Those persons who wish above all things to do this, he calls his church upon earth, and he would have all his lambs gathered into this fold. Loving and serving God in this way with our whole hearts, Christ compares to labourers working in a vineyard, in the following parable.

“The kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.” It was common for those who wanted work for the day, to go and stand in the market, or some other public place, early in the morning, and

then those masters who wished for workmen would go and hire them. When this householder had agreed with some men for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. "And he went out again about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the market-place, and said unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you; and they went their way. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive."

So when even was come, the Lord of the vineyard said unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give unto them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. He did so, and gave each man a penny. But when he came to those who had worked all day, they thought that more than this would be given to them. They did not seem to remember that it was the sum for which they had agreed to work all the day. They did not see that the kind-

ness of their lord in giving a penny to those who had come in so late in the day did not make him unjust to them, for he gave them all that he had promised they should have.

Dear children, God's church may be called his vineyard, in which he would have us work. Our blessed Saviour, who calls men to repent and believe God's word, may be called the Lord of the vineyard, and all who do the will of God are labourers in that vineyard. Now, when a person hires any one to work for him, he expects that the person hired will give up *all* his time to him; and if he attends to his own affairs, or in any way wastes the time in which he ought to be working for his master, he is guilty of robbery. We may learn from this what the servant of God, the disciple of the holy Jesus, ought to be. Do we give up our hearts and our time to him? Which do we think most about, dear children—pleasing ourselves, or pleasing Christ? Do we not sometimes pass *whole* days without remembering that God sees us; without loving him whom we should love with our *whole heart*, soul, and strength; without trying to do any thing to please him in whom we live, and move, and have our being?

Those persons or things that we love most, we think of most. Oh, then, if God is not in our thoughts, we are not indeed his servants, working in his vineyard; we are at present standing idle in the market-place: let us pray to the Lord of the vineyard that he will bring us into his vineyard to work!

The different times of the day at which the labourers were taken into the vineyard may serve to shew the different ages at which people begin to serve God. While some are so blessed as to serve him from their childhood, as Samuel did; others do not give up their hearts to him till they are many years older; others, again, live without God in the world, even until old age. But think, if, by the grace of God, their hearts be then turned to him, how grieved they must be that they did not begin to serve him sooner! When they find what a blessed thing it is to love God, how they will mourn over days and years that are lost! But the Lord of the vineyard gave the penny to *all* who worked in his vineyard, even to those who came in at the eleventh hour. So will God pardon all, whether young or old, who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, forsake their sins, and seek to have their hearts made clean by his blood.

But, dear children, though God has been pleased to give us these gracious promises, that none may fear to come to him at any time of their lives, yet it is very wrong to put off coming to Christ, because we think there will be time enough by-and-by. Do not children die? Do not young people die at all ages? You may be very young, but you are old enough to have heard of Christ Jesus, to know that you are born a sinner in the sight of a holy God, who must punish sin because he is a *just God*, and who will punish it because he hates it. Therefore you cannot die safely unless God has *for Christ's sake* pardoned you and made you his child. Oh, then, go to Jesus, and tell him, that you are a sinner, but that he died for sinners; tell him that you want to love and serve him; and pray to him to put his good Spirit into your heart, to teach you what to do. The Lord loves little children, and he has said, "*They that seek me* EARLY SHALL FIND ME." They are his own words, and he cannot lie: for his word is truth. That you may seek and find it so, dear children, is the earnest prayer of your affectionate friend,

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## LETTER XXXIV.

Do you remember that I told you about two sisters named Martha and Mary, who lived at Bethany, to whose house Jesus went, and that Martha was very busy, and anxious to provide for her guest, while Mary, although not less eager that he should be well received, thought more about listening to the holy words which fell from her Lord. They had a brother named Lazarus, who became very ill; therefore his sisters sent unto Jesus, saying, "Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick." They had heard and seen many of the cures which our Saviour had wrought upon those who had been brought to him; and they felt, that surely if Jesus knew that their brother whom he loved was sick, he would come and heal him. •

When Jesus heard it, he said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." Yet he did not go to them directly, but stayed where he was for two days longer. At length he said to his disciples, "Our friend Lazarus



sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep." Jesus meant by this that their friend was *dead*.

Death, dear children, is sometimes said to be like sleep, because after we have slept we rise up again, when the bright sun shines out from the sky; and we feel refreshed with the pleasant rest which God hath given us: so when we die, our bodies will be laid in the grave for a time, but, at the command of the Lord Jesus, they will one day rise from the tomb, and be joined again to our souls, which can never die. And if we have fallen asleep, or died, in Jesus, we shall then awake, to behold him as our God and Friend, and be permitted to stand before his throne, and sing, "Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever! Amen."

Our Lord's disciples did not understand him: they thought that he spoke of taking rest in sleep, and they said, "Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well." Jesus then told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead; and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that ye may believe." Our Lord had often been graciously pleased to heal the sick: but now he was going to shew a

yet greater instance of his divine power, by raising Lazarus from the dead.

Bethany, the town where Lazarus had lived with his sisters, was in Judea, and when Jesus spoke of going there, his disciples reminded him that when he was there last, the Jews sought to stone him. When, however, they found that he would go, Thomas, who is also called Didymus, said unto his fellow-disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him!" We see from this that Thomas loved his Lord, but he had not faith to believe that no harm could befall his much-loved Master till he himself permitted it.

Bethany was about two miles from Jerusalem; and when the Jews who lived there heard of the death of Lazarus, many of them came to Martha and Mary to comfort them about their brother. It is a custom among the Jews to bury their dead a very few hours after they cease to breathe; so we may suppose that Lazarus was buried, perhaps, the day after he died; and when our Lord reached Bethany, he had been in the grave four days. As soon as Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him; but Mary sat still in the house. When Martha saw him, she said, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." But

I know that, even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee." Jesus saith unto her, "Thy brother shall rise again!" Martha said, she knew that he should rise again at the last day. Jesus said unto her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die. ♦ Believest thou this?" She saith unto him, "Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world!"

You see, Martha knew that Christ had all power, both in heaven and earth. She knew that all who believed in him should never die, because Jesus would raise them up at the last day. She owned that he was the Son of God, that Saviour whom the prophets and holy men of old had said should come into the world. She felt that this Saviour had loved her brother; that he was their friend; and she said, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." Did she forget that Christ could, if he pleased, have saved the life of Lazarus without coming to Bethany? Could he not have spoken the word at a distance, that his servant and friend might have been healed

But our Lord saw fit not to grant their request at first, "for the glory of God, and that the Son of God might be glorified thereby."

We know, dear children, that if any of our friends are sick, they cannot be raised up to health again, unless it is the will of God, unless he blesses the means made use of for their cure; that the same God who can bring back the dead to life, can alone heal our diseases. Yet Jesus knew there were many among the Jews, who had not believed in him when they had seen him cure the sick, who would own him for the Christ, when they saw their friend brought to life again from the dead.

Martha went back to the house, and said to her sister, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee." When Mary heard this, she arose quickly, and went to him. The Jews who were with her in the house did not hear what Martha had told her; and they said to one another, "She goeth unto the grave, to weep there." So they followed, and saw her fall down at Jesus' feet, and say, as her sister had done, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled,

and said, Where have ye laid him?" they say unto him, "Lord, come and see." "*Jesus wept!*" Then said the Jews, "Behold how he loved him."

Dear children, those tears which fell from the eyes of our Almighty friend, might not, perhaps, be shed for the loss of Lazarus; because he knew that he had only to speak the word, and the grave must give up its dead. But he wept for sinful, fallen man, he wept for us. He knew it was our sin which had brought death into the world. He knew that if man had always been obedient to God, neither sickness nor death would have had any power over him. He felt, also, that all who were standing round him, must one day die, and be laid in the grave; and that unless they believed in his power to raise them up again, there would be for them no happy heaven in which they might live for ever, in the presence of God; but an eternity of distress and wo, of which we can form no idea. And he could read the hearts of all who stood there. Some he saw were ready to believe in him, willing to own his power. Some, perhaps, did feel their hearts bow before him, and might be ready to say, "Lord! speak out the word, and thou canst give him back to

us again." But, alas! there were many whom he knew would go away to mock his power, and deny their Saviour, and "*Jesus wept!*" Dear children, if you are in sorrow, go to him, and tell him all your griefs; humble your hearts before him, for he knew what sorrow was, and he can calm the bursting heart.

Jesus therefore, again groaning in himself, cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it, which Jesus told them to take away. Martha said, "Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he hath been dead four days." Jesus said unto her, "Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?" After this, Martha did not try to prevent it any more, and they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid.

Some of the Jews, when they saw the miracles which Jesus did, that he gave sight to the blind, caused the lame to walk, and healed all manner of sick people, would not allow that he had any power from heaven to do these things. They said that he did them by the power of the evil one. But upon this occasion, where so many of them were gathered together, Jesus, to remind them from whence he came, lifted up

his eyes, and said, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always; but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me." And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes, and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, "Loose him, and let him go."

Then many of the Jews which saw these things believed on him. And is it not wonderful that any who had seen this miracle should go away, and plan to take away the life of him who had done so great a thing. But so it was: the chief priests and pharisees called a council; and Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, prophesied that Jesus should be put to death. They were afraid that the people would believe in him, and make him a king, which they thought would make the Romans angry, to whom they were subject at that time. This made Caiaphas say, that it was better that one man should die for the people, than that all the nation should perish, which he thought would be the case if they did any thing to displease

the Romans, who had a great deal of power. This cruel high priest little thought, when he said this, that Christ was indeed to die for the people, not of Jerusalem alone, but for the whole world. From this time they took counsel to put him to death; but it pleased our Lord to retire for a while from the towns and villages into the country, where he continued with his disciples, and at that time walked no more openly among the Jews.

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## LETTER XXXV.

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As our Lord was going up to Jerusalem, when he came near Jericho, he saw two blind men sitting by the way-side begging. A great many people had followed Jesus; when the blind men heard the multitude pass by, one of them asked what it meant? and was told that it was Jesus of Nazareth. Upon this he cried out, "Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me." The people tried to silence him; but they both called so much the more, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David." Jesus, whose ear is ever open to the cry of all those who call upon him, stood still, and commanded that the men should be brought to him. When they were come, he said, "What will ye that I should do unto you?" and they said, "Lord! that our eyes may be opened." Then Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes, and they received sight. After this we read that they followed him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw what had been done, gave praise unto God.

Dear children ! we may not be blind, we may be able to see every thing around us, the beautiful sunshine and the pleasant fields, and to rejoice in the light; for this we should praise and thank God. And every blessing which we receive from him, should make us willing to do as these men did to whom our Lord had given sight; *they followed* him, and so should *we*. We should love to walk in his ways, and keep his commandments, and thus glorify God. If we did this, our example might perhaps be the means of causing our companions to do as the multitude did when they saw what was done—They gave praise unto God!

There was a man named Zaccheus, who lived at Jericho. He was a rich man, and chief among the publicans in that place. He had a great wish to see our Lord as he passed through the city. But the crowd was so great that he could not get near; and being a very little man, he tried to think how he could manage to get a sight of him whom he so much wished to see. So he ran on before, and climbed up into a sycomore-tree, which stood in the way that Jesus was to pass. It does not seem that he had any knowledge of Christ as his Saviour, that made him wish so much to behold him;

but we may suppose that he had heard of the blind men who had just been restored to sight, and he had some curiosity to see one who could do such great things. But it pleased the Searcher of hearts to make this a day to be remembered by Zaccheus; for he opened his heart to understand the things of God. As Jesus passed by, he looked up into the tree, and said to him, "Zaccheus, make haste and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house." And he made haste and came down, and received him joyfully.

When the people saw this, they murmured, saying, that Christ was gone to be guest with a man who was a sinner. You know the publicans were all looked upon in this light by their neighbours; and they were perhaps too apt to cheat those from whom they had to collect the taxes for the Romans, by asking more than was right, and making themselves rich by dishonest means. But the heart of Zaccheus had been touched; and when he heard those around murmuring because our Lord was going home with one who was a sinner; to prove that he really meant to follow Christ, he said, that he would give half his goods to the poor, and that if he had taken more than he ought from any

man, he would restore it to him fourfold. Thus he shewed that he really loved the Saviour, by wishing to do what he knew would please him. And Jesus said unto him, "This day is salvation come to thine house." How happy the publican must have felt! Perhaps he and his family had lived without the fear and the blessing of God, up to this time. But now they were to become a household serving the Lord. This day was salvation come to their house; for "the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost."

Our Lord was at this time journeying towards Jerusalem for the last time; and he well knew all that should befall him there. He told his disciples, by the way, that all that was written of him by the prophets, should come to pass;—that he should be betrayed, and given up to the chief priests and scribes; that he should be condemned to death, but that on the third day he should rise again.

As they drew near Jerusalem, we read that the people all thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. That is, the Jews most of them thought that when their Messiah should come, of whom the prophets had spoken, it would be with great power, as an earthly

king, and that he would thus set them free from the Romans. Therefore they were not willing to think that the meek and lowly Jesus was indeed the prince for whom they were looking. He told them that his kingdom was not of this world. He spoke to them of an heavenly kingdom, which should never end:—but they would not have him to reign in their hearts. Yet when they saw all the mighty works which he did, many of them began to think that he must be the Christ; and they thought that he was going to Jerusalem to set up his kingdom upon earth immediately. To do away with this idea, he spake to them the following parable.

A certain nobleman went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. He called his ten servants, and gave unto them ten pounds, saying unto them, "Occupy till I come." By this he meant that they were each to take one pound, and do the best they could with it during his absence. They were each to trade with their pound, and make as much more of it as they could while he was gone. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, "We will not have this man to rule over us."

And it came to pass, that when he was

returned, having received the kingdom, he commanded those servants to be called, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, "Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant, because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities. And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin; for I feared thee, because thou art an austere man." He was afraid that, if he traded with his pound, instead of adding to it, that he might lose what he already had. So he laid it by, where it was of no use to any one, instead of doing the best he could with it, and trusting to God for a blessing on his endeavours. But his Lord said unto him, "Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow. Wherefore, then, gavest thou not my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have received mine own with usury?"

A usurer is a person who lends money for gain. Suppose you were to lend some one a shilling, and he were to agree to pay you a penny a week for the use of your money until he was able to return it. You would at length, when he paid back his debt, receive your money with usury. That is, you would get your shilling again, besides all the pence which he might have paid you for the use of it. Thus the nobleman hoped not merely to receive back the pound which he had trusted to his servant, he expected to find that he had added thereto.

And he said unto them that stood by, "Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds. And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds!" But the pound was given to him, because he had done what he could with his Lord's money.

If the man with the one pound had made but one more of it, he would not have been punished. But he had not done any thing with the little he had in charge; therefore the nobleman said, "that unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him." It was very just that the servant who had obeyed his master best should be trusted with more than he who had not shewn any wish

to please him, and that the pound which the unprofitable servant had so wasted should be taken from him, and given to the good servant. The nobleman also commanded that his enemies, who would not that he should reign over them, should be brought and slain before him.

Dear children, do you see the meaning of this striking parable? I will try to explain it: and do you pray to that Saviour from whose mouth it came, to teach your hearts the lesson which may be learnt from it. The nobleman who went into a far country is Christ Jesus, our blessed Saviour, who is gone up into heaven, where he reigns over all. The citizens who hated him, and would not have him to rule over them, we may suppose to be the Jews who did not believe in him. And we are his servants: and to each of us he has given something to trade with till he shall come back. You may perhaps ask, "What have I to use in his service?" I will tell you. Has God given you health and strength? You must use it in such a way as you think will best please him. Has he given you speech, by which you can make known your wants to those around you, and tell your friends how much you love them? Oh, love to praise him for all his mercies. Has God



seen fit to deprive you of health, and are you weak and sickly, obliged to lie upon your bed, perhaps in pain, whilst your companions are full of health and enjoyment? Even then you may serve God. He will give you patience to bear your afflictions, if you pray to him for it; and you may then shew by your gentleness and submission to all which he sees good to lay upon you, that you are one of those servants who are preparing to meet their Lord when he shall return to them. Has he caused you to be born in a happy land, where his name is known, and where all may be taught to know him, from the least to the greatest? Oh thank him for this mercy, and pray for those who are yet ignorant of his name. But you see the nobleman in the parable came back again, and called his servants to give an account of the things they had done in his absence. So our Lord will one day return. When he came down upon earth to bear the punishment of our sins for us, he came in much humility, and to set us an example that we should love to follow. But when he comes again, dear children, it will be to say unto those who have been his faithful servants, "Well done;" and to punish those who have not obeyed him, and who would not have him to

rule over them. We may not live to see him come back to judge the world, because we do not know the exact time when he will do so. But we must all die, and we know not how soon we may be called upon to give up our account. O let us pray to God to give us grace to serve him daily, that when we at last stand before him, we may not be found to be wicked and slothful servants.     • ,

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## LETTER XXXVI.

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Our Lord arrived at Jerusalem some days before the passover, and he spent those days in doing good, as he always did, and in speaking to his disciples of the things which should happen. He also gave them many blessed words of comfort and counsel, which we may read in the Gospels. About six days before the passover he went to Bethany, where Lazarus was, who had been raised from the dead. They made Jesus a supper at the house of one Simon a leper; and Martha, who was always ready to do what she could for her Lord, waited upon him—but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. Here, again, we see Mary where she best loved to be, at the feet of Jesus. For we read that she took a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed his feet, and wiped them with the hair of her head, and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. Judas Iscariot, the disciple who afterwards betrayed his Lord, and gave him into the hands of his enemies, said,

“Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and the money given to the poor?” This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and kept the bag in which the money would have been put. Then said Jesus, “Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she done this; for the poor always ye have with you, but me ye have not always.”

There were many people present at this supper, from Jerusalem, who had heard of Lazarus having been raised to life again by Jesus; and who came to see him who had been thus taken from the grave. Multitudes began to think that Jesus must be the Messiah, and that the Pharisees were very wicked in setting themselves against him. So cruel were they, dear children, that they tried to kill Lazarus, because of the miracle which had caused so many to believe on Christ. The next day many people that were come up to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm-trees, and went forth to meet him, crying, “Hosanna, Blessed is the king of Israel, that cometh in the name of the Lord!” As they drew near to Jerusalem, Jesus sent two of his disciples into a village near by,

where he told them they would find an ass tied, and a colt with her, which they were to bring \*to him. And he told them, "If any man say any thing to you, ye shall say, the Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them."

It had been said by a prophet of the Lord a very great many years before this time, that Jesus should come to Jerusalem, meek, and sitting upon an ass's colt. Thus was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet. The disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them. They brought the ass and its foal, spread their clothes over them, and set Jesus thereon. A very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strewed them in the road. And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, \*Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest!" What a sight it must have been to see the multitude thus welcome the Prince of Peace to that city which had been so often favoured by the Most High God. They evidently thought he was coming to set up his kingdom there, and to reign over them as an earthly sovereign. But, alas! the

crown which was to be placed upon his brow in that guilty city, was one of thorns; and many who now cried, "Hosanna!" afterwards shouted, "Crucify him!"

When Jesus was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, "Who is this?" and the multitude said, "This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee." Our Lord knew that the chief priests and pharisees were planning how they might take away his life; yet he did not hide himself from them; but went openly to the temple, that beautiful place of worship, which he prophesied should be pulled down to the ground, so that one stone would not be left standing upon another. The Jews were not willing to believe in the destruction of a building which stood so strong, and to which the people thronged daily. But they must have thought of his words, when, about thirty years after, God permitted the Romans to seize upon Jerusalem, and that temple which they had so often polluted, was thrown down to the ground, as a punishment for their sins. When our Lord went into it at this time, he found that they were using it as a place in which to carry on their trade. He seems to have reproved them for so doing some time before. And now he

again cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of those that sold doves, and said unto them, "It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves." And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them. He was followed even here by many. And the children came round him, crying, "Hosanna to the Son of David," which displeased the chief priests and scribes. But our Lord told them that even the praise of little children was acceptable to God, and said, "Have ye never heard, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise."

When the evening came, Jesus went back to Bethany to sleep. Perhaps he went to the house of Lazarus, to see those by whom he was really beloved; and glad indeed must they have been to receive such a guest.

On his return to the city in the morning, he was hungry; and seeing a fig-tree by the way, he went up to it, that he might gather some fruit to eat,—but found none; for there were only leaves upon it. When Jesus saw this, he said, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward

for ever." I have before told you the parable of the barren fig-tree, dear children, and you have also read of the nobleman who gave each of his servants a pound, to occupy with till he should return. You may remember the fig-tree was to be cut down if it did not bear fruit, and the servant was punished for not making a good use of his Lord's money. Here again, our Lord taught his disciples another lesson. This fig-tree had a fair shew with its beautiful leaves, so that to a mere passer-by it would seem like a fruitful tree. Yet, when it came to be looked into, no fruit was to be found thereon. So may we appear to be doing good, and professing to love God, and calling ourselves his children; and our companions and friends may be led to think much better of us than we deserve. But it is only God, dear children, who can look into our hearts, and see whether all our actions spring from love to Christ; whether our hearts are right in his sight: for, if they are not, we are useless servants, and like the fig-tree on which Christ found no fruit. Our Lord slept at Bethany again the next night; and as they went into Jerusalem the following morning, when they passed by, the fig-tree was withered away.



The day before it had been fair and green; but at the word of our Lord it was dried up from the roots. The disciples took notice of it, and Peter said, "Master, behold the fig-tree which thou cursedst is withered away."

They were passing near the Mount of Olives at this time, and Jesus, to teach them that if they would but believe on God, and put their trust in him, they would always be heard, said, "Have faith in God." He then pointed to the high mountain which was near them, and said, "Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that these things should be done, he shall have whatsoever he doth ask." After their Divine Master was taken from them, dear children, when they were left to be persecuted and perhaps slain by their enemies, what a comfort these blessed words of their Redeemer must have been to them, and how dear to their hearts all the promises which he had made that he would hear their prayers, and answer them!

And these promises are not given for them alone, but they are meant for our comfort. Our prayers will be heard as well as theirs. For Christ hath said that he will be with all

who love him, even to the end of the world; and that whatsoever we shall ask in prayer, believing, we shall receive. Oh then, dear children, you must learn to pray *aright*; because God will not hear prayers that are not offered in a right spirit. When you kneel down to pray, ask your own hearts whether the thing you are going to pray for will be pleasing in the sight of God: whether you are ready to give up your own will, if God should see fit not to grant it to you,—and remember that God is in heaven, and you upon earth; therefore let your words be very humble, and your heart bowed before him. Come to him in the name of *Jesus*, for whose sake he has promised to hear our petitions; and above all things go to your Saviour, and ask him to put his Holy Spirit into your hearts, who will not only teach you to pray *aright*, but will shew you what you should pray for.

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## LETTER XXXVII.

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WHEN our Lord was in the temple at this time, he one day spoke the following parable: he told them of a householder who planted a vineyard, hedged it round, and digged a winepress in it, built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country. When the time drew near that the fruit in it would be ripe, he sent his servants to the husbandmen who had kept it, that he might receive the fruits of it. But they took the servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Their Lord then sent others; but they treated them in the same cruel way. When he found that these rebellious servants did not pay any respect to his messengers, or heed their lord's commands, but meant to keep the produce of his vineyard for their own use, he thought he would send his son to them, for, said he, "they will reverence my son." But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said, "this is the heir; come, let us kill him, and keep the vineyard for ourselves." And they

caught him, cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him.

You know, dear children, that we brought nothing into this world; we came into it little helpless children: and it is certain that we can carry nothing out. When we die, we leave behind us all that we may have of this world's wealth; we no longer need it. If a parent has houses or lands, he knows that when he dies he will leave them to his children, and the child to whom he leaves them is called his *heir*. Thus these wicked husbandmen are spoken of as killing the *heir*, that is, the son, to whom the vineyard was one day to belong, that they might keep it for themselves.

You may have read in your Bible, how in the early ages of the world God called the children of Israel to be his own people. He kept them apart from the heathen nations by whom they were surrounded, and to their lawgiver Moses he made known his will, and all the things which he would have them do. This highly favoured nation was the vineyard, dear children, which had been planted by God, who is here meant by the householder. After he had made known to them his will, and given them laws which they were to follow, he did not any more

speaking to man in the way by which he had made himself known to Moses. This Christ calls in the parable going away into a far country; and although God had helped them through so many difficulties, although he had brought them up from the land of Egypt, where they suffered grievous bondage, and was their guide and guard through the weary wilderness, yet when the Israelites had once more found homes in their own pleasant land of Canaan, they forgot God, they turned to idols, and thought no more of the holy laws of the God of Israel. But from time to time he sent his servants the prophets among them, to remind them of him to whom they owed obedience; but these they often killed or treated cruelly, and refused to listen to them. Thus the wicked husbandmen stoned their lord's servants. At length the son, the heir of the vineyard, he to whom it would one day belong, was sent to them; and I told you that they caught him, cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him.

After Jesus had thus spoken, he asked those who stood by what the lord of the vineyard would do unto those wicked husbandmen when he came? They said, "He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his

vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons."

They did not see that it was of themselves that our Lord spoke; that he was the Son of God who stood before them, and who had been sent into the world to bring sinners back to God, to persuade them to give of the fruit of the vineyard to their Lord, that is, to turn to him with their whole hearts, and devote their lives to his service. They did not see that it was of his own cruel death he spoke, when our Lord said that the wicked husbandmen caught the son, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. But Christ knew that they would bring him before their rulers, carry him out of Jerusalem, and nail him to the cross on Mount Calvary. And the Jews did not know that they were passing judgment on themselves, when they declared that the householder would miserably destroy those wicked servants, and would take away the vineyard from them, and let it out to others.

This sentence has been fulfilled as far as it relates to the Jews. Their city was miserably destroyed about thirty years after this time. Their temple was pulled down to the ground. Many of the people perished by sword and

famine, and bitter indeed has been their punishment for putting to death the Lord of life. They have been since scattered about over the face of the earth; they have been persecuted, despised, evil spoken of. Their vineyard has been taken away, and let out to others. God has no longer made them his only people; but he has called a people to know and serve him, and to make known his name in the world, from every nation unto heaven. All those who are not Jews are called Gentiles, and from among the Gentiles has he been graciously pleased to raise up a people to call upon his name. All who love the name of Christ, and wish to serve him, form Christ's vineyard in the present day. The ministers of God, the Holy Bible, the Spirit of God in our hearts, are all so many messengers sent into the vineyard of our hearts, to remind us of our God, and of what we owe to him. ~~Oh, let us not slight~~ these warnings, dear children; for remember, that Jesus Christ will come again one day, when he will punish, (oh! how terribly,) all who have not submitted themselves unto him. But blessed will that day be for those who love him, for those servants whom he shall find watching.

Dear children, if your dear father were gone

away on a long journey, and you were not quite certain of the exact time when he would return home, would you not watch for him every day? Would you not meantime wish to do those things that you knew he would like, that he might find you well employed on his return? Oh, with what delight you would meet him when he really came, and how you would long for the happy hours you expected to spend with him when he should take you to live with him. Oh, pray to that Saviour of all who call upon him, whether Jew or Gentile, old man or little child, that he may help you to do his will, and that you may be found waiting for him. And it is very true, for the Bible tells us so, that he will come again; and even if we are not alive when he comes again to destroy his enemies, and reign over every heart, we must one day die; and we cannot tell how soon that may be. We must stand before his judgment-seat, and oh remember that, unless we have made him our friend while alive, we cannot hope that he will then make us one of his happy fold.

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## LETTER XXXVIII.

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JESUS spake another parable besides the one of the householder and the husbandmen, in which he shewed the Jews that a people would be raised up to serve the Lord from among the Gentile nations around, because they refused to listen to him who would have been unto them the power of God unto salvation. This he again taught in the parable of the marriage feast which a certain king made for his son; but when he sent to ask the guests, they would not come. He then sent other servants, saying, "Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready, come unto the marriage." But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise; while others took his servants, treated them spitefully, and slew them. When the king heard of it, he was wroth, and sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. He then sent other servants into

the highways, to call fresh guests to the wedding instead of those who had proved themselves not worthy to come. The king told them to bring as many as they could find, both bad and good; so the wedding guests sat down.

Thus far you see the parable is very much like that in the last chapter, which shewed us that God was willing to have mercy upon Israel, for whom he had planted a vineyard, and round whom he was as the tower of defence, which the householder built to keep them from their enemies.

Now, he shews that he was willing to call them to the Gospel feast; but they would not come. And they killed and persecuted those servants of God who were sent to shew them the way. But there is something more which I have to shew you in this parable, which we should all pray may not be our lot.

When the guests were all seated at the feast, the king came in, to see them. And as he looked round, he saw one man there who had not on a wedding garment; and he said unto him, "Friend, how camest thou here, not having a wedding garment?" And he was speechless. He had no excuse to offer. For he who had sent him this gracious invitation would

have made him fit to appear at his table, by putting a proper garment upon him, if he had been willing to accept it. Therefore he could make no excuse. Then said the king, "Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen." You will easily see that I wish you to understand by this parable, that we are all called upon by God, through Jesus Christ, to come unto him. He says unto us, as the king did unto his guests, all things are ready, come to the marriage. But perhaps you may not see what is meant by this unhappy man not having on a wedding garment. Those who come to God, through faith in his Son, dear children, believe that they are very vile, and quite unfit to appear before a holy God; and unless there was one to pity and help them, they dare not come to him, against whom they know they have sinned all their lives long. But they also know that their Redeemer has suffered death for them,—that he has borne the punishment of their sins; and that if they believe in him, he will take their guilt upon himself, and give them a portion of his righteousness.

Thus clothed in the righteousness of Christ, the humble penitent comes thankfully to God, feeling all the while that there is nothing in himself which can please a holy God: but that because the righteousness of Christ is thrown as a cloke over his sins, God will, for Jesus' sake, love and pardon him. Dear children, unless the Holy Spirit makes you feel this in your hearts, you cannot understand it. But pray to God, that he will make you wise unto salvation; that when you are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb, to sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God, you may not be thrust out because you have not on the wedding garment of the righteousness of Christ.

As our Lord was leaving the temple, he sat down over-against the treasury, and saw the people casting in their money. The treasury was a place set apart for those offerings which were spent in the service of the temple, to buy the things needful to be used in their worship. And all who loved God might put therein what they had to spare for these purposes. As they each came with their offerings on this day, they thought perhaps little of His eye, who saw not merely the sum which each one brought, but

the motive which called forth their gift. Christ saw many who were very rich bring large gifts. But he saw also a certain poor widow cast in two mites, (a mite is worth about half a farthing,) and he said, "Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all." Our Lord knew that by putting in their large sums of money, those rich men were not giving away any thing that they really wanted for themselves; but he knew that this poor widow had to work very hard for all that she earned; and that most likely in order to give this little to her God, she had to deny herself something of which she stood in need. Therefore Christ said, that "she had indeed *given more than they all*; for they of their abundance had cast in unto the offerings of God, but she of her poverty had cast in all the living that she had." Dear children, we may not have much to give to our God, but you see he looks at the heart; and a little given with a ready mind is more prized in his sight than many a larger gift which does not come from love to him. Oh, try to shew your love to your heavenly Father by doing good to those around you. You may not have any thing to give them; but you can shew kindness to them. And remem-

ber that Christ said, that he who gave only a cup of cold water for his sake, should have his reward.

What a sweet lesson of love to our enemies, and pity for them, should we learn from Jesus, who, although the people at Jerusalem had treated him cruelly, and would soon, he well knew, put him to death, yet he mourned over them, and thought, with the compassion of a parent, of the troubles, which he knew were to come upon that guilty city; and he said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." As our Lord left the temple with his disciples, they pointed out to him, as he passed, all the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, "See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

He then went, and sat upon the Mount of Olives, within sight of Jerusalem. And the disciples came to him privately, saying, "Tell us, when shall these things be?" They also

asked him about his coming again; and about the end of the world: Our Lord was graciously pleased to give them many signs by which his servants might learn to expect the coming of these events; and he assured them that his word was true. He told them that heaven and earth should pass away, but his words should not pass away; that all the things which he had spoken should come to pass. But he said, "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." He told them that he should come suddenly, like a thief in the night, when men were not looking for him; as the flood did in the days of Noah. "Watch, therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." For, if the master of the house had known at what hour the thief would have broken in, he would have guarded against him. "Therefore, be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."

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## LETTER XXXIX.

OUR Lord continued his discourse to his disciples about death and judgment by the following parable: in which he shewed the difference between those who have in their hearts real religion, and those who have it not. "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom." Our Lord here alludes to the custom among the Jews, who used to fetch home their brides at night, by the light of lamps, which were carried by the bride's maids: whose place it was to wait at the bridegroom's house for his return with his bride; and when they heard him coming, they would take their lamps and go forth to meet him. But we read that five of these virgins in the parable were wise, and five were foolish! They that were foolish took their lamps, but took no oil with them; whilst the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.



While they waited for the bridegroom, they all fell asleep: and at midnight they were **awoke** with the cry, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him!" Whilst they had been sleeping, their lamps had burnt dim, so they all arose, and began to trim their lamps in haste, that they might be found ready with them all burning. Then was seen the difference between the wise and the foolish virgins. You see they all began to watch for the coming of the bridegroom. They all took their lamps, which seemed at first to burn brightly alike. But when they had waited awhile, they grew weary, they forgot to watch for his coming, and they all fell asleep. At length, when they were suddenly roused by the call to prepare to meet him, they found that for want of watching, their lamps were become dim, and had to be trimmed. But the wise virgins had fresh oil, with which they soon caused them to burn brightly again: while the five who were foolish, and had not taken any fresh supply, were frightened, and would gladly have borrowed of those who were wiser than themselves, saying, "Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out." The wise virgins had none to spare. They had not a drop more than they knew they should want for them-

selves, and could not help them; but told them to go to those that sold it, and buy for themselves.

They went; but, alas! while they were gone, the bridegroom came, and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut. When they returned, it was in vain that they begged to have it opened: "Lord! Lord! open to us." But the bridegroom answered and said, "Verily I say unto you, I know you not."

Jesus Christ here speaks of himself as the bridegroom. His whole church upon earth is called the bride, and every Christian is said, by him, to be a light in the world. Therefore, all who profess to follow Christ are compared, in the parable, to the ten virgins who came out to meet the bridegroom.

We are commanded by our Lord to let our light so shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father who is in heaven. But, dear children, the Christian's lamp would soon go out, unless it were fed with the oil of grace. If we expect to be able to do right, and to keep our lamps burning brightly, in our own strength, we shall soon find out our mistake.

If, when you begin the day, you pray to God for his guidance, that he will be with you, and help you to do your duty, to obey your parents, to watch over your tempers, that you may be kind and gentle to your companions; if you thus always look for the aid of his Holy Spirit, you will be enabled to become obedient and gentle. Grace will be given you to shew yourself a child of God. Your good example will shine as a light to your companions, and they will see how lovely a thing it is to be a Christian child. But if, when you rise in the morning, you forget to ask his blessing, who can alone keep you from falling into temptation; if, when you meet with any thing you may not like, you do not lift your heart to him to enable you to correct your evil tempers, you will soon become disobedient and quarrelsome. And though you may say that you wish to be a child of God, you will shew that you are not one by your conduct. Your example will not be a bright one; your lamp will go out; and you will shew that you belong to those foolish ones who had no store of oil with which to trim their lamps. If you have neglected to pray to God for his grace to help you in time of need; when your little trials of temper come upon you, you will

have nothing to trust to but your own strength, which will fail you, as the oil did those who neglected to furnish themselves with a fresh supply.

But we should notice one thing in this parable, dear children. These virgins *all* fell asleep; not merely the foolish, but the wise ones also forgot to watch for a while. This shews us how very apt we all are, even the best Christians, to grow weary in well-doing. But, if we are really Christians at heart, we shall always be very much grieved when any thing has tempted us even a little to neglect our duty; because it may cause our good to be evil spoken of. When wicked people see those who profess to be Christians neglecting their duty, it is very natural for them to think that there cannot be much truth in religion,—that it is a gloomy thing, which we are glad sometimes to shake off. This should make the Christian very watchful, that his lamp may not become dim, and that he may not disgrace his God and Saviour. And whenever you are tempted to do wrong, confess it at once, seek for pardon and grace from God directly, that your lamp may shine brightly again.

But, alas for those who are not in the habit of coming to God! When any unexpected trouble comes upon them, they know not where to go for comfort and help. Their lamp goes out, and they are left in distress and darkness! Oh, let us pray for wisdom from above, dear children, that the grace of God may guide us all our life long, and support us when we come to die. We may thus, each of us, seek to learn a lesson from this parable, of the awfulness of not being ready to meet our Lord when he shall come! and let us remember the words with which Jesus finished this parable, "Watch, therefore; for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."

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## LETTER XL.

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JESUS related another parable so very much like the one, I have already told you of the pounds, that I will not relate it here; but you can turn to the 25th chapter of Matthew, where you may read it yourselves. At the same time he spake of that last great day when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him. He was then before them poor and lowly, often suffering pain and weariness for our sakes, and for their sakes who treated him with scorn. But he told them the day would come when they should see him sitting upon the throne of his glory; and before him should be gathered all nations—all who have ever lived upon this earth. Adam will be there; Moses, and all the prophets; Isaac, Abraham, Jacob, and all the patriarchs of old; the Jews who nailed him to the cross, and the Gentiles who have called upon his name; with those who have by their many sins crucified the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. All the kings and

princes who have ever lived, with the very meanest of their subjects, the poor Indian and the rich oppressor, will then be fairly judged. You and I, dear children, and every one whom we have ever known, will in that awful day have to stand before the throne of Christ. In that day will he shew that to him is known every secret thought of our hearts. He will be able to read all hearts in that countless throng, and will separate those who have loved and served him from those who have not. He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd would divide the sheep of his flock from the goats. And he will set the sheep on his right hand, and the goats on his left. Oh that you, dear children, may be then found among the lambs of his fold, among those on his right hand, to whom he will say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me."

Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, "Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and

fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?" The humble Christian will feel in that day that all he can possibly have done for his Lord will be far too little; and he will not feel that any thing like reward is due to him for his poor services. But he will be ready to take shame to himself for not having shewn more love to his Saviour, by denying himself far more than he has ever done. But listen to the gracious words of that Redeemer who looks to the heart, and knows the motives from which we act. He says, "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Our Lord once reminded his disciples, that when he was gone from them, and they could no longer shew him any kindness, they would have the poor always with them; and any little acts of love which the Christian has it in his power to shew the needy, if done for the love of Him who has borne so much for us, will be looked upon by Jesus as shewn to himself.

But listen to the awful words which he will speak to those on his left hand: "Depart from



me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick and in prison, and ye visited me not!" Then shall they answer, saying, "Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?" Then shall he answer them, saying, "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me!"

Dear children, our Lord had before taught the people, saying, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." And here we see that they who are hard-hearted and selfish, who shew no mercy to others, will not meet with any themselves when they come to stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. "They will be sent away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal."

Remember, that those who are here called the righteous will not be rewarded merely *because* they have clothed the naked, fed the hungry, or visited the sick. For they may have done all this, and yet their hearts may not be right in

the sight of God. But it will be, because when they did these things ~~they~~ thought of their Saviour, who had borne so many trials for them; who had died, that their sins might be pardoned for his sake. And they knew that by loving their fellow-creatures, whom he also loved, and for whom he also died, they would shew their gratitude to him; whilst those who know not how much Christ would do for them, if they did but come to him, cannot love him as the Christian does, who feels through him his sins forgiven, and his peace made with God. Therefore when they shew kindness to their fellow-creatures, it may be that they wish for the praise of men; or they do not like to refuse a favour that is asked of them; or they may even do it because they take a pleasure in seeing other people happy. But we must not forget that even then, unless we shew mercy to others for the *love of Christ*, Christ will shew no mercy to us at the day of judgment.

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## LETTER XL.

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THE time drew very near when the Lord of life was to suffer a painful death upon the cross, to redeem us from the power of sin and the grave. And, oh! may we never think of those awful events without remembering that he was wounded for our sins; that he was bruised for our transgressions; that his sufferings have procured for all who will only come to him pardon for all their sins.

The chief priests and scribes met together, to consult how they might put him to death. They were afraid to seize him openly in the street or the temple; for they feared that the people, who were come together to the passover would rise in his defence, because of the wonders they had seen him perform. By whom do you think Jesus was at last betrayed? Who agreed to let his enemies know when they might best lay hands upon him? Judas, Iscariot! one of his disciples! one who had lived with him, seen his love to mankind, and often heard the words of love which ever fell

from His lips. He came to the chief priests, and said, "What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you?" How base we should think it in any one, to betray a friend with whom he had once lived, to give him up to his enemies, and for the gain of a little money to place his life in the hands of those whose wish it was to kill him! What then can we think of him, who gave up his Lord to be crucified; that Lord, who has power to punish his enemies as well as to bless his friends? as Judas must have seen. Do you not wonder that he was not afraid of the judgment of God for his treachery? But his heart was hard, and he agreed to betray Christ to them for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to do so.

The day at length came, dear children, the last day which the disciples were to spend with their beloved Master, before he laid down his life for them. Oh, if they had known this, how sad they would have felt, how they would have clung to him through that day, if they had known they should so soon see his face in the flesh no more!

There is something very touching in our Lord's coming up to Jerusalem at the feast of the passover, to suffer. This feast was kept by

the Jews in remembrance of that awful night when they were led out of Egypt by the will of God, by Moses and Aaron. Pharaoh, the wicked king, had made them his slaves. Moses and Aaron had begged of him to let the people go into the wilderness, to worship the God of their fathers. But he hardened his heart, and would not let them go. God had laid his hand heavily upon him, and sorely punished him for his disobedience; but he would not repent! At length God said, that the first-born in all the houses of the Egyptians should die in one night; that the destroying angel should enter every home, and cause every mother in the land to weep for her first-born. But God was merciful to his own people, and delivered them from the coming danger.

They were commanded to take a lamb without spot or blemish, which was to be slain, and its blood to be sprinkled on their door-posts, by all the children of Israel, that when the angel of death passed by, he might *pass over* all the houses so sprinkled. Thus the blood of the innocent lambs was made the means of their deliverance from death. It was also meant to point them to that Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, who had been promised to them, in whom they

were to find pardon for all their sins, and by whose blood freely offered they were to be cleansed from all their guilt. Their Saviour came, as had been foretold. But instead of looking to him for pardon and safety, they were about to shed that blood which would have redeemed them from sin, at the very time too of that feast which was meant to remind them of him.

It was on the first day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed, that the disciples came and asked Jesus where he wished them to make it ready. He sent Peter and John into the city, where he said they would be met by a man bearing a pitcher of water, whom they were to follow. And when they saw him go into a house, they were to go after him, and say to the goodman of the house, "The Master saith unto thee, My time is at hand! I will keep the passover at thy house. Where is the guest-chamber, that I may eat it with my disciples?" And he will shew you (said Jesus) a large upper room furnished and prepared; there make ready for us." They did as he commanded. They went into the city, and found every thing as their Lord had foreseen; and they made ready the passover.

In the evening, Jesus came with the twelve. They were all with him, even he who was watching for an opportunity to betray him. Their hearts were full; for although they did not know that he was to be taken from them that very night, yet he had often spoken to them of the things that should come to pass. And he now said, "I have desired to eat this pass-over with you before I suffer. For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, "Take this, and divide it amongst yourselves; for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come." How sad it is to take leave of a dear friend, with whom we have taken sweet counsel together, who has protected us through many dangers, and shared with us in our joys and sorrows. To think that we are sitting with him perhaps for the last time, and that we may soon hear his voice no longer. Do you not think that, after he was gone from you, you would take a mournful pleasure in fulfilling his wishes? in doing any thing that would bring him often to your remembrance?

At that parting feast, as they were sitting

together, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, saying, "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you: *this do in remembrance of me.*" Likewise, after supper, he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it them, saying, "This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you and for many, for the remission of sins. This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me!" Our Lord did not mean that the bread and the wine were really his body; but he compared that broken bread to his human body, which was so soon to be torn by the nails and the cross. And the wine, which had been pressed from the juice of the grape, was a fit emblem of those drops of blood which were so soon to be wrung from him. He was to be taken from them; but they were to meet together from time to time, and call to mind all that their gracious Lord had done for them. By this they would shew in whom they trusted, and, by calling to remembrance his dying words, they would be comforted amid all the troubles which he had taught them to expect in the world. \* And it is a blessed privilege, which Christians in every age since that time have



delighted to enjoy, that of coming to his table to celebrate his love in dying for them. "I am the bread of life," said Christ, and the Christian, when thus permitted to commune in spirit with his risen Lord, feels, that, unless the Lord Jesus had laid down his body, and shed his blood, and thus borne the punishment of his sins, his soul must have perished, even as his body would do without its daily bread.

The feast of the passover, as kept by the Jews, was meant to point to them the future sufferings of the Lamb of God. And, dear children, the feast of the Lord's supper, which has since been kept by the church of Christ, not only reminds us, that for us that blood was shed, but it tells us that Jesus is ever present with his people, and that they shall one day behold him again; for the apostle says, that as often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we do shew forth the Lord's death till he come.

I told you that all the disciples were with their Lord at this time, even Judas. Although none of his companions knew of his treachery, yet the Saviour was not deceived. He knew all that Judas was going to do; and he said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of your

which eateth with me shall betray me." They were grieved to hear him speak thus, and looked at one another, doubting of whom he spake. It made them very sorrowful, and they each asked him, "Lord, is it I?" And he said, "It is one of the twelve that dippeth his hand with me in the dish. The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but wo unto that man by whom he is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born."

Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom he loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. Jesus said, "He it is to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it." And when he had dipped it, he gave it to Judas Iscariot. Our blessed Lord was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth. Not one word of reproach did he speak to his faithless disciple, but meekly gave himself up to suffer every thing for our sakes. He turned to Judas and said, "That thou doest, do quickly." So little did they suspect the traitor, that when they heard their Lord's words to him, they thought he was telling him to get something

they had need of, or that he should give something to the poor. After this, Judas left the room, to carry on his wicked plans. By this time it was night.

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## LETTER XLII.

IF you would read the words of love and kindness in which our blessed Lord spoke to his disciples, as they sat at table after the supper was ended, you may find them in the latter chapters of St. John's gospel. This apostle was much beloved by his Lord. It was he who was leaning on his bosom at supper. And he tells us, that supper being ended, our Lord rose from the table, and took a towel and girded himself, poured some water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel.

When he came to Peter, he said unto Jesus, "Lord! dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered, "What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." Peter saith unto him, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." Jesus said, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." Simon Peter said unto him, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." Peter was surprised to see our Lord

condescend to so humble an action as to wash the feet of such a sinful being as he felt himself to be. But this act seems intended to point out to the Christian, that unless his daily sins are washed away by Christ, he can have no part with him. When a person first receives the grace of God into his heart, repents, and forsakes his sins, he is forgiven for the sake of Jesus. But even then he needs the grace of God daily to keep him from falling. He daily needs an interest in the blood of his Redeemer. Water is used by us to make clean any thing that has become soiled; and water was here used by our Lord, as a sign or emblem of his power to make clean the guilty heart.

After he had washed their feet and was set down again, he said unto them, "Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master, and Lord: and ye say well, for so I am. If then I your Lord and Master have washed your feet; ye ought also to wash one another's feet." Dear children, if the Son of God did humble himself to wait upon his followers; ought not we to be ready and willing to do all we can for those around us, whether they are rich or poor—to be ready to serve each other in love? The religion of Christ has sometimes been called a religion of

love; and he gave this night a new command to all who wish to follow him.

He said, "Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me; and as I said unto the Jews, whither I go ye cannot come; so now I say unto you. A new commandment I give unto you, *that ye love one another*; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." And how has he loved us? Has he not laid down his life for us? Has he not borne the punishment of our sins? These are things we may not be able to do for each other; but we may humbly imitate his constant care for the comfort of those around him, his forgiveness of injuries, his sympathy with all, his forgetfulness of self. By this shall all men know that we are his disciples, if we have love one to another. Simon Peter said unto him, "Lord, whither goest thou?" Jesus answered him, "Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards." Peter said, "Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake!" Peter felt at that moment as if he could give up every thing for his Master: that rather than ~~not~~ follow him, he was ready to die. But Jesus, who knew that his disciple loved him, knew also that he

said these words in his own strength; and that in the time of trial it would fail him. And he answered, "Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily I say unto thee, the cock shall not crow twice till thou hast denied me thrice."

When Jesus saw how grieved they were to part with him, and that they mourned because they were so soon to be left as sheep without a shepherd, in the midst of a world which hated them, he said, "Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions." To that happy home of the spirits of just men made perfect by the blood of Christ, did he tell them that he was going, to prepare a place for them. He also gave them this gracious promise, "I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also; and whither I go ye know, and the way ye know." Thomas saith unto him, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?" Jesus answered him in these blessed words, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me!" Christ is indeed the only way by which we can come to God. He has opened a way of access to

the Father for the humbled sinner. To the *truth* of Jesus's gracious words, that for his sake he shall find pardon for his sins, may the sinner trust. And it is he who will raise us up at the last day, and give us *eternal life* !

It was at this time that our Lord spoke those never to be forgotten words, in which he so plainly declared himself to be one with God : Philip saith unto him, " Lord, show us the Father ! " Every reader of the bible knows, dear children, that God is there spoken of as the Father. Now listen to our Saviour's answer, Jesus saith unto him, " Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip ? *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father !* Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me ? " If Christ had been a mere man, dear children, the Spirit of God might indeed have been in him, as it is in the heart of every good man ; and he might have done the works which he did by the help of this Spirit : but in that case how could he have said that those who had seen him had seen God ? But we cannot doubt the words of him who was *the truth*. Earthly friends may prove false, and leave us in the time of need ; but God will never forsake those who believe in Jesus. :



We think of God as of a being so great, that we hardly dare draw near to him; but he has made himself known to us in Christ Jesus, that we might not fear to come to such a friend. He shews us how very near he is to all who love him, by a parable which he spake at this time. He told his disciples that he was a vine, and they were the branches. What a blessed thought! we know that the branches of a vine are kept alive by the nourishment which they receive from the root of the vine itself; and that if they were to be cut off from the stem, they would die. They could no longer live and bear fruit, when they were divided from what had supported them, and given them life. What the root of the vine is to the branches, such is Christ to the Christian, dear children. He supports him, and keeps alive his work in his heart. As the sap in the tree rises from the root, nourishes the branches, and makes them bear grapes, so does Christ pour his grace into the heart of every true believer, which enables him to forsake his sins, and shew by his actions that he is a child of God. But remember that Christ said, "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me." Unless we keep near to Jesus, and pray

for grace to help us at all times, we cannot be his disciples. If we trust in our own power to do right, we shall never stand against temptation. Oh, then, let us pray to God that he will teach us what it is to trust in Christ. Let us pray for the gift of the Holy Spirit, which will shew us how we may come to him as our Saviour. And remember that he has said, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

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## LETTER XLIII.

THE time was coming when the disciples would need comfort and guidance from above in the great trials which their Lord told them should come upon them. The day was at hand when those who killed them would say they were doing God service. But those who thus persecuted them were not taught of God. They did it, Christ said, because they neither knew him or the Father. We need not wonder that when they heard these things the disciples were grieved, that sorrow filled their hearts. They had long had Jesus with them. To him they had looked for help when in trouble; and they had seen him perform so many miracles, that they very naturally thought he was able to protect them from their enemies. He had at length declared plainly that he must leave them. But, dear children, in this sorrowful hour he gave them a blessed promise; one to which the heart of the Christian may well trust under all trials.

Our Lord did not leave his disciples without a guide to direct their steps. It was true they would no longer see him and hear his words. But he promised that after he was gone into heaven, God the Holy Ghost would come to them, and take up his abode in their hearts. The Holy Ghost is here called by Christ, the Comforter, because he would speak peace and comfort to the hearts of his people. Jesus said it was for their good, that he should go away; for, said he, "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." He said he had many things to say unto them, but they could not bear them then: but that when he, who is the Spirit of truth, should come, he would guide them into all truth. And this Holy Spirit, dear children, which reproves our hearts for sin, shews us what is right, and speaks to us of a judgment to come, speaks also of Christ. It is the voice by which he now makes himself known to his people. So that, you see, although our Lord is no longer present with us in the body, he lives and reigns in heaven above, where he sees every one of us at this moment, hears all we say, and knows as well what is passing in our hearts as he did when upon earth. He was then God seen in

the flesh; and he now speaks to us by God the Holy Ghost, the third person in the blessed Trinity. Thus, although we cannot see him, he is near every one of us. And how cheering to our Lord's disciples to know that by the Holy Spirit they could continue to hold communion with one so dear to them!

This gracious promise was fulfilled to the followers of Christ soon after he went up into heaven, namely, on the day of Pentecost; which was a feast kept by the Jews to mark the giving out the law from Mount Sinai, fifty days after their departure from Egypt. The word Pentecost means the fiftieth, and it was at this feast, fifty days after that in which our Lord had eaten the passover with his disciples, when they were met with one accord in one place, "that suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit made them able." Crowds of people came together when this was noised abroad; people who lived in many different nations, but who had come up to Jeru-

saalem to the feast: and they each heard the apostles speaking the language of their own land. So great a miracle was wrought when the Holy Ghost first came down from heaven. Our blessed Lord had promised that he would send help to his disciples. He had left them, to make known his name to all the world. But they were most of them poor unlearned men, who could only speak the language of their native country. But how firm must have been their belief in their Lord and Saviour, when they found his promises thus fulfilled. When they felt within them the power of that Holy Spirit, which was to make them able to do all things through faith in Christ Jesus.

Our Lord said to them on the night of the supper, "Verily, verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you!" Before this, they had not asked in his name; but now they were to ask in the name of that Jesus who was exalted above every name; and he said that they should be heard, and that the Father would love them because they loved the Son. At this time our Lord said, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again I leave the world, and go to the Father." Then said the disciples,

“Now we are sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.” They believed, dear children, what he told them of the glory that he had with the Father before ever the world was. They felt sure, that he who had been with them, and done so many mighty works, but whom they were now about to lose, they believed that he was God; that he came out from heaven; and that he was going up to heaven again, there to reign for ever and ever.

Before they left the upper chamber where they had eaten the passover with their Lord, and taken the bread and wine, and where they had listened to his parting words, Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, “Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son may glorify thee. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is, life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.” Our Lord prayed in the most touching manner for those whom he was about to leave. He ~~prayed~~ not for the world, for that world which lieth in wickedness, but for those which

God had given him, for, said he, "They are thine, and all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them."

In after years, when those who confessed Christ before men, were persecuted, and had to suffer cruel mockings and scourgings, bonds and imprisonment; when they were stoned, and slain with the sword; having no place where to rest their weary limbs but in the deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth, how sweet those blessed words must have been to them—"all mine are thine, and thine are mine." They loved their Saviour, and it was because they would not deny him, that they suffered all these things. But they had his word to comfort them. Their sufferings would soon end; and they knew that eye had not seen, nor ear heard, neither had it entered into the heart of man to conceive, the joys which God has prepared for them that love him.

But it was not alone for the Christians of that day that Jesus Christ pleaded with the Father. He did not pray for them alone, but for *all* those who should believe on him through their word. And he yet liveth to make intercession, that is, to plead with the Father for *all* who come unto him. Will you not come to him, dear



children? Will you not pray unto God the Father in the name of Jesus, that he will send his Holy Spirit into your hearts, to keep you from the evil that is in the world, and to make you able to conquer all your evil passions, that you may be his disciples, and he may be your Saviour. When Jesus had ended his prayer, they all sang a hymn together. It was the last time their voices were to rise with his, to his Father and their Father; for yet a little while, and he was to be where their eyes could not see him; but where he would hear every prayer, and every sorrowful sigh, that should be offered in his name.

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## LETTER XLIV.

WHEN the hymn was sung, Jesus went out of the city, over the brook Cedron, to the Mount of Olives. Here he told his disciples, who went with him, that they should all be offended because of him that night; for it is written, "I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad." But Peter said, "Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended." Jesus saith unto him, "Verily I say unto thee, that this day, even this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice." Peter felt that surely he could never deny his Lord, and said, "If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee!" Likewise also said all the disciples.

There was in the Mount, a garden called Gethsemane, to which our blessed Lord went on this night of sorrow. He had often retired there before with the twelve, but the hour was now at hand in which he was to be betrayed. His soul was heavy, and full of grief. He took with him Peter, James, and John, and said unto them, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto

death; wait ye here, and watch with me." And he went a little farther from them; and kneeling down, fell on his face to the ground; and prayed that if it were possible this cup might pass from him. Dear children, our blessed Saviour was indeed God from heaven; but for our sakes he had taken upon himself the form of a man; and with his human body he took also the sense of pain and suffering. A death of agony was before him, one which might well have brought dismay to any human heart. But it was not that which weighed down his spirit, and made him pray so earnestly, saying, "Oh, my Father, if it be possible, take away this cup from me!" Oh, no, it was the weight of the sins of the whole world which made him suffer. It was our disobedience and rebellion against a holy God, which afflicted him; for he came to bear the punishment of our sins. Oh, may we never think lightly of sin, but remember how dreadful a thing it must be in the sight of a holy God, who spared not his own Son, but laid on him the iniquities of us all! But even in this moment of agony, Jesus did not forget that he came to suffer the will of the Father, and he added, "not my will, but thine be done!"

After he had thus prayed, he went to the

disciples, and found them asleep. He said unto Peter, "Simon, sleepest thou? What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." And he went away again the second time and prayed, saying, "Oh, my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done!" He found the disciples asleep again. And Jesus went away; and prayed the third time, using the same words. So great was his agony, that although the night was cold, his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground; and there appeared an angel unto him from heaven strengthening him. When Jesus went back to them the third time, he said, "Sleep on now, and take your rest; behold the hour is at hand; and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand!"

Now, Judas, that wicked traitor, knew of this garden; for Jesus had often been there with his disciples. And while Jesus was speaking, this wretched man came with a multitude of people with swords and staves, and a band of officers to take him. Jesus did not attempt to hide himself from them, but went forth, and said unto them,

"Whom seek ye?" They answered him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus saith unto them, "I am he."

Dear children, let us dwell for a moment on this scene. It was in the still hour of night. No voice was heard in that peaceful garden, but that of the Son of God; when on a sudden the silence was broken by the noise of a multitude armed with swords and staves. There He stood who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth, with none around him but his few and frightened followers. But so strong is the power of innocence over the guilty mind, that even when our Lord had told them he was Jesus of Nazareth, they did not lay hands on him, but fell back. Then he asked them again, "Whom seek ye?" And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, "I have told you that I am he! If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way." Even in that awful moment he thought not of himself, but of the safety of his friends. Judas had told the people, that he whom he should kiss, was Jesus of Nazareth; and he came to Jesus, and said, "Hail, Master!" and kissed him. No word of anger fell from the Saviour's lips, but he meekly said, "Judas! betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" Oh, if his heart had not been hard indeed, very wicked,

and lost to all sense of feeling, would not this gentle reproach have cut him to the very soul? But the wicked have no pity left; and they laid hands on Jesus, and took him.

Peter drew his sword, and smote Malchus, the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear. But Jesus reproved Peter, touched the man's ear, and healed it. So kind was he to those who were come out to take him away to be put to death. He then turned to Peter, and said, "Put up thy sword into the sheath, for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword: thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled? The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" He had indeed power, dear children, to destroy all those who had come out to take him; but then he would not have borne the punishment of our sins for us; and we could never have been forgiven! Oh, how gently should we bear with those who would injure us, or do us wrong; how ready should we be to forgive them, when we read what Jesus Christ endured for us! But this was their hour, and the power of darkness.

Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled!

Oh, how great ~~must have been~~ the fear and anguish of mind which caused them to forsake him ~~whom~~ they really loved. But not one of them went with him to the high-priest. Oh, how humble ~~should this~~ make us, how distrustful of ourselves! We know that though in a moment of weakness and alarm they all left him, yet they afterwards suffered death and imprisonment for his sake. They were brought before kings and rulers; they were beaten, and put to great pain; yet nothing could then tempt them to deny their Lord. The Holy Spirit strengthened their hearts; and they confessed him before men. If these good men were tempted to forsake him, we have need indeed to pray for grace to be kept from falling.

Jesus was bound, and led away to Annas, who sent him in his bonds to Caiaphas the high-priest, at whose palace were assembled all the chief priests, elders, and scribes, waiting for him to be brought before them. So eager were they to condemn him, that they would not wait till it was day. Peter had not courage to go with his Master as his disciple; but he followed afar off, and so did one other disciple, who was

known to the high-priest, and who went to the palace with Jesus; but Peter stood at the door without, till that other disciple spoke to her who kept the door, and brought him in. The servants had made themselves a fire in the hall, for it was cold, and were sat down together; and Peter sat down with them, and warmed himself at the fire, where he waited to see what would be the end. Oh, how unlike his holy zeal in the cause of his Redeemer after he was gone from them into heaven, when he declared to the people that God had made that same Jesus, whom they with wicked hands had crucified and slain, both Lord and Christ!

But now that the council had got Jesus into their power, they could not condemn him to death without finding him guilty of some crime worthy of death. And how were they to prove this?" How were they to find any sin in him, who was without sin? If they had tried him by the holy law of God, they would have found him perfect. But they bribed wicked men to come forward as false witnesses. They laid to his charge things that he had never said or done.

But even this did not serve their purpose; for these men did not agree among themselves. If they had really had any thing to lay to his



charge, and had spoken the truth, they would not have contradicted each other. But as they had only falsehoods to utter against him, they each told different tales, and thus their witness agreed not together !

At last came two false witnesses, and said, "We heard this fellow say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, made without hands." But even in this they did not agree ; it was a false account of some words which our Lord had some time before spoken to the Jews. The words he really said to them were these, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The people thought he spoke of the temple in which they met to worship God, and they said, "Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?" But he spake of the temple of his body, that body which was to be crucified by wicked hands, and laid in the grave, from whence it was to rise again from the dead on the third day !

Then the high-priest stood up, and said to Jesus, Answerest thou nothing ? What is it which these witness against thee ? But Jesus held his peace, and said not a word ; "as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his

mouth." Again the high-priest said, "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ the Son of God, the Blessed? Jesus said, "*I am*:" and added, that although he was then before them oppressed and afflicted, yet the day should come when they would see him "sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." In that awful day, dear children, when the secrets of every heart will be known, they who buffeted and scourged him will have to stand before him in his glory, as well as those who have loved and served him.

When Jesus had done speaking, the high-priest rent his clothes, and declared that they needed no other crime to bring against him, for that he had spoken blasphemy; and the people said, "he is guilty of death." Then did they spit in his face, and buffet him; and the men that held him mocked him. And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, saying, "Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, who is he that smote thee?" and many other blasphemous words spoke they against him. Thus was the blessed Redeemer "despised and rejected of men;" he became for our sakes "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." "He was oppressed and he

was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth ; he was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth."

All this was said of Jesus by the prophet Isaiah some hundred years before he stood in the palace of the high-priest. But the Jews do not seem to have remembered the words of their prophet, while they were causing those very words to be fulfilled.

## LETTER XLV.

WHILST these wretched people were bringing upon themselves the wrath of God, by condemning the Son of God, Peter, you may remember, was sitting by the fire which the servants had made in the hall; and was waiting to see what they would do with Jesus. The damsel who kept the door, when she saw Peter warming himself, looked very hard at him, and said, "Art not thou also one of this man's disciples?" "Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee." It was then seen how truly our Lord had known the heart of his disciple, who a little time before had said, that he was ready to go with him to prison and to death; for now Peter was ashamed to own that he knew any thing of his forsaken Redeemer; and he denied him before them all, saying, "Woman, I know him not, neither understand I what thou sayest!" He then went out into the porch, and the cock crew. Oh, surely that sound would bring back to his mind the words of his

Lord, and keep him from denying him again. Alas ! no ; for when he was gone out, this maid saw him again, and some one else said unto them that were there, " This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth ;" and they asked him again, if he were not one of his disciples ? but he said, " I am not, I do not know the man." About an hour after, one of the servants of the high-priest, a kinsman, that is, a relation, of him whose ear Peter had cut off, saw him, and said, " Of a truth, this fellow was also with him ; for he is a Galilean !" and he said, Did I not see thee in the garden with him ? And they that stood by said unto Peter, " Surely thou art one of them, for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech betrayeth thee." Peter then denied the third time, and began even to curse and swear, saying also, " Man, I know not what thou sayest ; I know not the man of whom ye speak." Whilst he was speaking, the cock crew again ! "*And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter !*" Oh, what a look of sorrow it must have been, how much more touching than any word of reproach which Jesus could have spoken ; for it almost broke the heart of the repentant disciple. In an instant he felt how base he had been, to deny his Lord, who was about to lay

down his life for him; and he remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said, "Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice; and when he thought thereon, he went out, and wept bitterly. Dear children, if you are ever tempted to forsake or deny your Saviour, (for you may be guilty of this crime as well as Peter,) if you are at any time afraid to shew yourself to be a Christian child, O go to Christ Jesus, and pray that he will give you grace to repent, and turn unto him again. Peter's repentance was sincere, for he turned from his sins. We do not hear of his ever denying his Lord again; but we find, from the Scriptures, that he became one of his most active disciples; and that at last he suffered a most cruel death, because he would not deny the Lord Jesus.

There are two kinds of sorrow, dear children. Peter, you see, was sorry, and his sorrow made him hate his sin; and he never fell into it again. He was humbled for it before God; and God gave him grace to repent. This kind of sorrow the apostle Paul calls a *godly sorrow*, which leads us *to repent*, that is, not merely to be sorry for, but to forsake, our sins. And if we thus repent, our heavenly Father will, for Jesus' sake, *save us from our sins*. The other

kind of sorrow the apostle calls the *sorrow of the world*, which he says, *worketh death*. That is, a person may feel that he has been a sinner, and he knows that God must punish sin, therefore while his sin is unforgiven he cannot be happy. But he may feel this without hating his sin, and perhaps if it were not for the fear of punishment, he would go on sinning without feeling unhappy, because he does not hate sin, and wish to be holy. But you will see better what I mean by an example. Peter mourned for his sin with a godly sorrow, and it brought him repentance unto salvation, not to be repented of. But the traitor, Judas, when he saw that Jesus was condemned to death, was frightened at the consequences of his sin, and we read that he repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, "I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood;" and they said, "What is that to us? See thou to that." But now, dear children, see the consequence of the sorrow which was felt by Judas. Did he go and fall at the feet of Jesus, and confess his sin, and beg for pardon? Was he very humble, and ready to do all he could to shew Jesus how sorry he was for what he had done

And did he begin, from that day, to lead a new life, praying to be kept from sin for the time to come? No, he was driven to despair; he was afraid of punishment, but his heart was not humbled; and he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple, and went and hanged himself. His was the sorrow of the world, which worketh death.

After the chief priests and elders had condemned Jesus to death, they had not power to take away his life, without bringing him before Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor. Therefore they led him early in the morning to the judgment-hall. Pilate came out to them, and asked what they had to accuse Jesus of? They said, "If he had not been a malefactor, we should not have brought him up to thee." Pilate asked, why they did not judge him by their own laws? To which they answered, that it was not lawful for them to put any man to death; thus shewing that nothing short of the death of Jesus would satisfy them. But, mark how they helped again to fulfil the words of prophecy. If the Jews had put Jesus to death according to their own laws, he would have been stoned to death, which was their punishment for blasphemy, of which they pretended to



think him guilty. But holy men of God had declared, years and years before, that he should be lifted up from the earth, and crucified, which manner of putting to death was in use among the Romans.

It seems that Pilate could not find any thing against Jesus : but he took him into the judgment hall, and asked him whether he had really called himself a king. Jesus did not deny that he had, but said, "My kingdom is not of this world : If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews." Pilate said, "Art thou a king then?" Jesus answered, "Thou sayest that I am a king,—to this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth, heareth my voice." Pilate saith unto him, "What is truth?" But without waiting for an answer to his question from Him who was the truth itself, and who could have answered him as none other could, he went out again to the Jews, and said, "I find in him no fault at all ! But ye have a custom that I should release one unto you at the passover ; will ye, therefore, that I release unto you the King of the Jews?"

It was the custom at the time of this feast for the Roman governor to set free some Jewish prisoner, and Pilate thought that, as he could find no fault in Jesus, he should satisfy the people by setting him free. But they would not have it so, but cried out, "Not this man, but Barabbas." Now Barabbas was a robber. Although Pilate could find no fault in our Lord, yet because of the outcry which the Jews made, he treated him as if he had been really guilty. For he scourged him; and the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it upon his holy head; and they put on him a purple robe in mockery, and then said, "Hail, king of the Jews!" and they smote him with their hands. Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, and Pilate said unto them, "*Behold the man!*" When the chief priests and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, "Crucify him! crucify him!" Pilate said, "Take ye him and crucify him, for I find no fault in him!"

Let us take warning by Pilate, dear children, and not be persuaded to do what we know to be wrong. You see he did not believe Jesus to be guilty, and yet he gave him into the hands of his enemies to be crucified. Oh, re-

member, that it was that our sins might be forgiven, that our blessed Lord endured all this insult and scorn from his enemies, for he said unto Pilate, "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above." Christ could have called angels to his help: one word of his could have struck his murderers dead upon the spot, for he had all power both in heaven and in earth. But then his blood would not have been shed for us; and with his stripes we are healed.

Pilate heard the people speak of Galilee, which caused him to ask whether Jesus were a Galilean. Now Herod, the governor of Galilee, was in Jerusalem at this time; and when Pilate found that Jesus belonged to that country, he sent him to Herod, willing, if he could, to avoid passing sentence upon an innocent man. When Herod saw Jesus he was very glad, for he had often heard of him, and hoped now to see some miracle done by him. But when questioned by Herod, our Lord answered nothing. He knew that the Jews were bent upon his death, and so meekly bore their accusations.

Then Herod with his men of war set him at naught, and mocked him, and dressed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate.

And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together, for before they had been enemies. Oh, they little thought that the despised Galilean, who had been the means of putting an end to their hatred, was the Prince of peace; that he whom they now set at nought would one day judge them both at the bar of God: that they would one day have to stand before his judgment-seat, to give an account of all their deeds. Pilate once more called together the chief priests and rulers, told them that he could find nothing worthy of death in Jesus, and said, "I will therefore chastise him, and let him go." But they all cried out, "Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas." Pilate, who was willing to release Jesus, said, "What shall I do then with Jesus who is called Christ? him whom ye call the king of the Jews?" They all cried out, "Crucify him! crucify him!" Then said Pilate, "Why, what evil hath he done?" But they cried out the more that he might be crucified.

Whilst these things were passing in the judgment hall, the wife of Pilate sent unto him, saying, "Have thou nothing to do with that just man, for I have suffered many things in a dream because of him!" When Pilate saw that

he could not prevail on the Jews to have Jesus released unto them instead of Barabbas, he called for some water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it." Yet he was willing to please the people; so he released unto them Barabbas, who had been put into prison for murder, and after he had scourged Jesus, he gave him over to them to be crucified; whilst all the people cried out, "His blood be on us, and on our children!" Awful words! heavy indeed has been their punishment, for shedding this innocent blood! The blood of themselves and of their children was shed by the Romans, who destroyed their city and their temple. They have become strangers in their own land. The judgments of God have fallen upon them, and he has permitted them to be despised and persecuted by other nations for the last eighteen hundred years. But let us pray that the curse which they brought upon themselves may be turned into a blessing, for that blood which they shed can wash away even their sin. May they look to him whom their fathers pierced, and mourn. Then shall they find that the blood of Christ Jesus can take away all sin.

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## LETTER XLVI.

WHEN the Lord Jesus had been thus given up by Pilate to the fury of the people, the soldiers led him away into the common hall called Prætorium. Here they seemed to try who could most insult the meek and holy Jesus. They stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe; and when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it on his head, and a reed in his right hand: which things were meant to represent the sceptre and crown, and royal robes worn by kings. Then they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, king of the Jews!" "Oh, they little thought that the day will come "when every knee shall bow at the name of Jesus, and every tongue confess that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father!" They did spit upon him, and smite him with their hands, and they took the reed, and smote him on the head. And the soldiers, after they had thus mocked him, took off the purple from him, put on his own garment again, and led him out to crucify him.

On the way to Mount Calvary they met a man of Cyrene, Simon by name, who was coming out of the country : on him they laid the cross, and made him carry it after Jesus. Although our Lord had been forsaken by his disciples, yet all who went with him at this time were not his enemies ; for we read that there followed him a great multitude of people, some of whom were women, who bewailed, and lamented for him. But Jesus, turning unto them, said, Daughters of Jerusalem ! weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and your children." Think of the tender mercy of our Redeemer, who at that awful moment, when he was about to bear the wrath of God for our sins, could think of the grief of others, and of the sorrows which he knew would soon come upon them. He told them not to weep for him, and spoke with pity of the days that were at hand.

As if to add still further to the contempt with which they treated the Saviour, they led out two thieves to be crucified at the same time. But God had said many years before that it would be so ; for he had put it into the heart of his prophet Isaiah to say, that, "he should be numbered with the transgressors." Thus by putting Jesus to death with two evil-doers, they did

indeed count him who was without sin, as one of the transgressors.

When they came to the place called Golgotha, which means, in the Hebrew tongue, "the place of a skull," they gave him wine to drink mixed with myrrh. It was the custom to give some strong drink of this kind to persons about to suffer, that they might not feel so keenly the pain they were to go through. But Jesus put it aside, and would not taste it. They also gave him vinegar to drink, mingled with gall: but when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink.

And here, dear children, they took the Lord of glory, who had almost fainted beneath the weight of his cross, and under their cruel blows and insults; and there they nailed him to the cross, and the two thieves with him, the one on his right hand, and the other on his left. Oh! was it for this that he had left his throne on high? Was it needful that he should bear all this, that we might be forgiven? If he had not done so, dear children, we never could have been pardoned! Because our hearts are so wicked, that we cannot of ourselves please God. We were born in sin, and we sin every day of our lives. Therefore if Jesus Christ had not borne



the punishment of our sins for us, we must have perished for ever.

But God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Oh, let him not have suffered in vain for you, if you feel that you are a sinner, (and if you do not know this, pray to God to teach it to you,) go to your heavenly Father, and tell him so, and ask him to forgive you for the sake of that Saviour who bore the punishment of your sins in his own body on the cross. You see how he loved sinners; how meekly he endured all that was laid upon him. Cannot you trust him! You see how he loved those who loved him, and how much he did for them. And has he not done as much for you, for me, for all, even before we loved him, while we were dead in sin? But perhaps you are afraid you do not love him? You know you have been very wicked, and you think that you are not good enough to come to him. But do not wait till you feel less wicked, because that will not be till you *have trusted* in him. *Go to him*, and he will take away your hard heart, and give you a new heart, which will love him. He does not hate you:

for he even prayed for those who nailed him to the cross, saying, "Father, forgive them: for they know not what they do!"

Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross, and the words were, "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." It was read by many of the Jews, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near to the city; and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin. The chief priests wanted Pilate to alter it, saying, "Write not, the King of the Jews:" but, "He that said, I am the King of the Jews." But Pilate would not, and answered, "What I have written, I have written."

The soldiers who had crucified Jesus took his garments, and parted them amongst themselves; but when they took up his coat, and found that it was without any seam, woven from the top to the bottom all in one piece, they said, "Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, and see whose it shall be." Even this had been foretold by David; for it is of our Lord that he speaks when he says in the 22d psalm, "They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture." They then sat down to watch, as was the custom when any one was crucified, that the body might not be taken down from the cross

until it was quite dead. The wretched sufferers often lingered in this painful state for many hours. Our Saviour endured it for about six hours. Meanwhile those that passed by reviled him, and railed on him, saying, "He saved others, himself he cannot save," with many other words of blasphemy. Oh, how little they knew of his power to destroy them all and save himself! How little they thought of his love, who was thus suffering himself that they might be saved. Even one of the thieves who was hanging at his side, reviled on him, saying, "If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us." But the other rebuked his companion, saying, "Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? and we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss." See the difference between these two men: the one was hardened in his sin, and even when he was in pain himself, could revile one whom he saw suffering at his side: the other was repentant. It is true he could not shew it by leading a new life; because the law had passed the sentence of death upon him. But the Bible tells us that "whosoever believeth in Jesus shall not perish, but have everlasting life." This penitent sinner

on the cross believed in his Saviour, though he saw him beaten, and mocked, and nailed to the cross; yet he had faith given him to believe that his blood could cleanse away all his guilt, and he said unto Jesus, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom!" And Jesus said unto him, "Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

Oh, what a lesson does this teach us of the mercy of our God, who gave his grace unto the thief, and brought him to repent and be forgiven even in the hour of death, though he had led a sinful life. But, oh, dear children, let none of us dare from this to put off our soul's concerns. We cannot tell how sudden may be our death. Let us therefore not trust to a death-bed repentance. You see there were two thieves crucified with our Lord; but only one of them repented, the other died with his sins unpardoned, which may perhaps be your case, if you do not repent *to-day*.

In this hour of sorrow, she who had been the mother of our Lord stood by his cross. The malice of the Jews, the faithlessness of his friends, nothing could tempt her who had watched over his helpless childhood to forsake him then. The aged Simeon had told her, when

he blessed the infant Jesus in the temple, that a sword should one day pierce through her own soul also. And, oh! sharper than any sword must have been the pang she felt when she saw him thus torn and bleeding. She was there with her sister, and Mary Magdalene, and John the disciple whom Jesus loved. When our Lord saw this group of his few faithful friends, looking at John, he said unto his mother, "Woman, behold thy son!" Then saith he to the disciple, "Behold thy mother!" And from that hour John took her to his own home.

And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. We read that the sun was darkened, and the veil in the temple which separated the holy of holies from the other parts of the sanctuary, was rent from top to bottom. Thus shewing that the types or signs which had been shewn by the law of Moses were now fulfilled in the person of Christ; that the way to the holiest was laid open; that all, both Jew and Gentile, might now come to God by the new and living way, by Jesus Christ the righteous.

At the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" which means, My God, my God, why hast thou for-

saken me? It must indeed have been dreadful to Jesus, as the Son of God, to have felt the Father's wrath; but God spared not his own Son, but laid on him the iniquity of us all. After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, "I thirst." Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar; and one of them ran and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and gave him to drink. Thus were the words of David fulfilled, who says, speaking of Christ, in the 69th psalm, "In my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink."

When our Redeemer had taken the vinegar, he said, "It is finished!" Yes, dear children, the work of our salvation was finished. Christ had borne the punishment of our sins; and he cried with a loud voice, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." And having said this, he bowed his head and died! The rocks were rent; there was a great earthquake; the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of their graves after the resurrection of Jesus, and appeared to many.

Now, when the centurion and they who were with him watching by the cross, saw the earth-

quake, and the things that were done, and heard Jesus cry out, and saw him die, they feared greatly, and glorified God, saying, "Certainly this was a righteous man." "Truly this was the Son of God." And all the people that came together to see that sight, when they saw the things that were done, smote their breasts and returned.

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## LETTER XLVII.

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It was on the sixth day of the week that our Lord was crucified; and you know that the Jews keep their Sabbath on the Saturday, or seventh day of the week. To prevent the bodies remaining upon the cross on the Sabbath day, the Jews went to Pilate, and begged that their legs might be broken, to hasten their death; and that they might then be taken away.

The soldiers came and brake the legs of the two thieves, who were still living; but when they came to Jesus, they found him already dead; so they brake not his legs, but one of the soldiers, with a spear, pierced his side; and forthwith came thereout blood and water. Thus was the Scripture fulfilled, which says, "They shall look on him whom they have pierced." They had also been commanded not to break a bone of the lamb which was slain at the passover as a type of Christ; and here we see that not a bone was broken of that Lamb or



God, of whom the paschal lamb had been a sign.

There was a rich man named Joseph, who lived at Arimathea, a city of the Jews. He was a good and just man. He was one of the council; but he would not consent to the death of Jesus: for he was one of those who were looking for a Messiah whose kingdom was not of this world. He waited for the kingdom of God, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews. But when he saw the things which were done, and how his Lord was left by those who had been his open followers, he came boldly unto Pilate on the evening of that day, and begged the body of Jesus, that he might take it away, and bury it. When Pilate found, from the centurion, that our Lord was really dead, he gave leave; and commanded the body to be given to Joseph.

Now, in the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden; and in the garden a sepulchre, which Joseph had hewn in the rock, wherein man had never yet been laid. Into this new-made grave did this just man lay the body of his Redeemer, after he had taken it down from the cross, and wrapped it in fine linen. Nicodemus, a man who had once come

by night to Jesus to be taught, came and helped Joseph in this work of love. The latter brought myrrh and spices, about an hundred pounds weight, which, with the fine linen, they wound about the body of Jesus, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. By this time the Sabbath drew near, in which they did not think it lawful to do any sort of work: so they laid their Lord in the grave, rolled a large stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.

Thus was the prophecy fulfilled, which said of Jesus Christ, "That he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death." He was put to death with the wicked, but he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. And these two just men, who were also very rich, took his body, and laid him with the rich in his death.

Mary Magdalen and the other Mary came to see how his body was laid; and they returned and prepared spices and ointments, ready to embalm him when the Sabbath was over; meanwhile they rested, according to the commandment.

The malice of the Jews did not stop even here. They had condemned their Lord to death. They had seen his agony, and heard his

dying words. They had seen the sword thrust through his side, and knew that he was quite dead; yet they were not satisfied. They remembered the prophecy, that after three days he should rise again; and although it was the Sabbath, which they professed to keep so holy, the chief priests and pharisees came in a body to Pilate, and said, "Sir, we remember that that deceiver said while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again," command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night and steal him away, and say unto the people that he is risen from the dead. Pilate said, "Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can." So they went, took a guard of soldiers, whom they set to watch, and having sealed up the sepulchre, so that they thought it impossible for his disciples to get at him, or for him to escape even if he should come to life again, they went away.

But he who had thus humbled himself for our sakes, had power to lay down his life, and power to take it up again; and when the hour was come, at the dawning of the third day, behold! there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and

rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. How useless was the seal. The countenance of the angel was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow, and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. They fled, and went into the city, and told the chief priests what they had seen.

When they had heard these things, are you not ready to think, they must have cried out, "Surely this was the Son of God." But, no, they called the elders, and after they had taken counsel together, they gave large sums of money to the soldiers, to bribe them to say, that the disciples of Jesus had come and stolen him away in the night, while they slept. And they said, "If this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you." So they took the money, and did as they were told: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day

It was early in the morning on the first day of the week, and the third day after he was crucified, that our Lord thus rose from the dead, after the Sabbath of the Jews was past. And it is in remembrance of this blessed event, that Christians keep that day holy to the Lord, instead of the seventh or last day of the week.

Oh, what a joyful day should it be to all that believe in Jesus ! what a privilege to be allowed to put away our other thoughts and cares; and to call to mind all that our Redeemer has done for us ! God commanded the Jews of old to remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy ;” and, oh, what cause has the Christian to remember the day on which his Lord rose from the dead, to shew him that if he believes in the Saviour he shall also one day rise from the grave, and live for ever in heaven.

When the Jewish Sabbath was past, those women who had prepared the sweet spices brought them, that they might anoint the body of Jesus. It was very early in the morning that they came to the sepulchre, at the rising of the sun. As they came, they said among themselves, “ Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre ? ” for it was very great. When they reached the place, they saw a young man sitting by the side of the grave, clothed in a long white garment ; and they were afraid. But the angel said, “ Be not afraid, for I know that ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified. He is not here, for he is risen. Remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man

must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. Go quickly, and tell his disciples and Peter, that he is risen from the dead. He goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him."

Then they remembered the words of Jesus, and ran and told the eleven and all the rest. But their words seemed to them as idle tales; they believed them not, though Mary Magdalene, who had been before these other women to the sepulchre while it was yet dark, had found the stone taken away, and had told Simon Peter and that other disciple whom Jesus loved, that their Lord was gone, saying, "They have taken away the Lord, and we know not where they have laid him."

When Peter and John heard this, they ran to the sepulchre, where they found the linen clothes lying, and the napkin that had been put about his head, not lying with the other things, as if thrown down in haste by any one stealing the body, but wrapped up in a place by itself. When John saw this, we read that he believed that his Lord was risen; but Peter went away astonished, and wondering what these things meant. For the disciples do not appear to

have understood from our Lord that he would rise from the dead, therefore they wondered at that which was come to pass.

The first person to whom our blessed Lord made himself known after his resurrection was Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils. She was standing by the door of the sepulchre weeping; she had been to look for the body of her Lord, and it was gone; she wished to have shewn her love for him by paying some mark of respect to his lifeless form. And as she wept, she stooped down and looked into the sepulchre. There she saw two angels in white, sitting, the one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. They asked her why she wept? She saith unto them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." When she had thus said, she turned back, and saw some one standing near. It was Jesus himself! and he said to her, "Woman, why weepest thou?" Mary did not know him, but supposed it had been the gardener, and said, "Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus saith unto her, "*Mary!*" She turned and said unto him,

“*Rabboni!*” which is, to say, Master! Oh, how her heart must have thrilled with joy at the sound of his voice, at finding him alive for whose death she was weeping! She must have been ready to fall down at his feet, and bathe them with tears of joy. But Jesus said, “Touch me not! for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God.” How ready to forgive did Jesus shew himself to be! He said not one word about the faithlessness of his disciples, but he calls them *brethren*; thus shewing them that they were for his sake made the children of God the Father.

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## LETTER XLVIII.

MARY Magdalene went to the weeping disciples, and told them that she had seen the Lord, and what he had said unto her; but they would not believe it. On that same day two disciples set out to walk to a village called Emmaus, which was some little way out of Jerusalem. On their way, as they were talking of all these things which had happened, Jesus himself drew near, and walked with them. But their eyes were holden, that they should not know him. Jesus saw they were full of grief; and he asked them what they were speaking about that made them so sad. One of them said, Art thou a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? He said, "What things?" they say unto him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people; and how the chief priests and our rulers gave him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel." They told him also that this was now the third day

since these things were done, and that some of their friends, who had been that morning to look at the body of Jesus, found it not; but saw a vision of angels, who said that he was alive.

They little thought how well he to whom they spoke, knew the grief of their hearts, and how soon their mourning was to be turned into joy. Jesus did not at first make himself known to them, but reproached them for being so slow of heart to believe all that the prophets had spoken, who had said that Christ should suffer all these things, and then enter into his glory. And beginning at Moses, he went through all the prophets, explaining unto them all the scriptures concerning himself. Oh, what a blessed thing to have heard the Lord Jesus thus explain the words of God's book! But he still lives to teach us also, dear children, by the Holy Spirit. As they drew near to the village, Jesus seemed as if he would have gone further; but the two disciples pressed him to stay with them, saying, that the day was far spent, and evening was at hand. So he went in with them.

They sat down to meat. And, as they sat, Jesus took some bread and blessed it, and brake it, and gave them to eat. Then were their eyes opened, and they knew him; and he

vanished out of their sight! And they said one to another, "Did not our hearts burn within us by the way, while he opened to us the scriptures?" They no longer doubted that Jesus was risen from the dead; and though it was late in the day, they rose up that same hour, and went back to Jerusalem, to tell the eleven.—whom they found gathered together with some others, saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Peter;" yet, when they told them of their walk, and the things that were done by the way, they believed them not! You see that those to whom our Lord had really made himself known, did not for a moment doubt that they had seen their crucified Redeemer alive again. But those who had not seen for themselves would not believe.

Jesus, however, was graciously pleased to come amongst them that same evening when they were met together. The doors of the room were shut, for fear of the Jews; but while they were speaking, Jesus came and stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, "Peace be unto you." They were terrified, and thought they had seen a spirit; but he said, "Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet,

that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have." Thus did he calm their fears; and by shewing them his hands and his feet which had been torn with the nails, and his side which had been pierced by the sword, convinced them that he who stood before them was indeed no spirit, but Jesus of Nazareth, God seen in the flesh, their crucified Redeemer, their risen Lord! Then were the disciples glad, although it seemed to them too joyful a thing to be true.

Jesus said unto them, "Have ye any meat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish and some honeycomb, and he did eat before them. But Thomas, called Didymus, one of the disciples, was not with them when Jesus came; and when the ten told him that they had seen the Lord, he said, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." It was in vain that they told him that it was indeed Jesus whom they had seen: he would not believe their report, till he had seen for himself.

About eight days after, when they were all met together again, and Thomas with them, as they were sitting at meat, the doors being shut,

came Jesus, and stood in the midst, saying, "Peace be unto you." He upbraided them with their unbelief in being so unwilling to believe what they were told by those who had first seen him after his resurrection. He then shewed them, that although he had been away from them some days, he yet knew what they had said and thought during his bodily absence. For he turned to Thomas, and said, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold, my hands, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless, but believing." Oh, what peace and joy must this gracious act of kindness in thus putting an end to all his doubts, have brought to the heart of the disciple. He no longer doubted, but exclaimed, "My Lord, and my God!" Jesus saith unto him, "Thomas! because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed!"

Our Lord was pleased to shew himself many times to different people during the forty days which passed between the morning of his resurrection and his ascension into heaven. Once he went into a mountain in Galilee, where Jesus had told his disciples to come; and he was there

seen by above five hundred of the brethren, who had gathered together to meet him.

And Jesus spake to them, saying, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to do all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world!"

Dear children, these words were spoken by him who is the Truth! He never broke a promise that he made. He was with his persecuted flock, after he went up on high. He gave them strength to bear all their trials. He sent the Holy Ghost the Comforter into their hearts, so that they felt it far better to bear reproach for his sake, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. And he will be with all who love him, even to the end of the world!

Jesus shewed himself also to his disciples one day at the sea of Tiberias. Simon Peter, and Thomas, and Nathaniel of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, were in a ship fishing. They had been out all night, but caught nothing. In the morning Jesus came and stood

on the shore, but they knew him not; and he said to them, "Children, have ye any meat?" They answered, "No." He told them to cast the net on the right side of the ship. They did so, and were not able to draw it up for the multitude of fishes. Oh, who could thus have guided them and given them such a supply, but He who is ever near to satisfy our wants? The disciple whom Jesus loved being there, said unto Peter, "It is the Lord!" Then did Peter gird his fisher's coat unto him, and cast himself into the sea, to go and meet Jesus, whilst the rest came in their little ship, dragging the net, for they were not far from land.

When they reached the shore, they saw a fire of coals, and fish laid thereon, and bread. How thoughtful was their Lord thus to provide for all their wants! He told them to bring of the fish which they had now caught, and come and dine. And he took some bread and gave it to them, and fish likewise. When they drew the net to land, they found in it 153 large fishes; yet it was not broken. None of the disciples durst ask Jesus who he was; for they felt it was the Lord. Thus were they again permitted to see him, and to talk with him.

When they had dined, Jesus saith unto Peter,

Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?" You remember how Peter had before boasted that though others should forsake his Lord, yet he was ready to die for him. You have seen how he fell in the hour of trial. He was now humbled when he thought upon his sin, and he said humbly, "Yea, Lord! Thou knowest that I love thee." Jesus saith unto him, "Feed my lambs." He saith unto him again the second time, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" He said, "Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." Jesus said unto him, "Feed my sheep." Our Lord said a third time, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" Then was Peter grieved. He had three times denied his Lord; and perhaps he felt there was something of reproof in repeating the question so many times. He appealed to one who knows our hearts, whether we are really loving him or not, and he said, "Lord! Thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." Jesus said unto him, "Feed my sheep." Thus did our Lord shew that he had forgiven his repentant disciple by giving to his charge the lambs of his fold. Peter had known what it was to be tempted himself, therefore he was to feel pity and love for the doubting Christian. He was



to tell the trembling sinner of that Saviour who died for him, who bore the punishment of his sins. And thus Peter was to feed the lambs and sheep of Christ's fold.

Then said Jesus unto Peter, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, when thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst, but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thine hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not." This he spake, to shew by what death Peter should die. And there is reason to believe that he was crucified about forty years from this time. Thus were his hands stretched out, and being bound, he was carried whither he would not; because he would not deny his Lord and Saviour.

After this, Jesus Christ was seen by James; then by all the apostles, when they were met together. This was not long before his ascension. And he commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem; but wait there for the coming of the Holy Ghost, which had been promised them.

Then he opened their minds that they might understand the scriptures, shewing them how all the things which had taken place concerning

him, had been written in God's holy book  
And he commanded them to preach repentance  
and forgiveness of sins in his name among all  
nations, beginning at Jerusalem, promising that  
they should be baptized with the Holy Ghost  
not many days hence.

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## LETTER XLIX.

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I HAVE in these letters told you, that we are all sinners in the sight of God. And I have tried to make it plain to you what our Lord Jesus Christ has done for us, that we may be pardoned and made holy. He left his throne in heaven, where he had reigned, one with God, from all eternity; and condescended to take upon himself the form of a little child, that through him we might come unto the Father. You have been told what a life of trial and suffering he led while upon earth; and how wicked men nailed him to the cross, where he died for our sins. You have heard the gracious promises which he has given to all who shall believe in him, that their sins shall be pardoned and that he will put his Holy Spirit into their hearts, to make them hate sin, and love God.

We are now come to his last parting with his disciples upon earth, until that day when they shall see him on the throne of his glory, and hear him say those blessed words, "Come, ye

blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world!"

He led them out of Jerusalem, as far as to Bethany. On their way he again commanded them, saying, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." And what was this gospel, that they were to preach? Dear children, it was the *good news* that a Saviour had come into the world, and had died, the just for the unjust, that we might come unto God by him. All who believe this are safe, but those who will not believe, who will not come unto Christ that they may have life eternal, must suffer the wrath of God, and bear the punishment of their sins.

Now came the moment when they were to see his face in the flesh no more. For after he had spoken many things unto them, he lifted up his hands and blessed them! And it came to pass, while he blessed them, that he was parted from them, and a cloud received him out of their sight, and he sat on the right hand of God! Here was an end to all their doubt and fear. He whom they had loved was indeed taken from

them, but not, as before, to be laid in the grave, where all their hopes had been buried with him: but he was gone to prepare a home for them; he was gone up into heaven, that they might one day follow him, and be with him where he is.

Whilst they looked steadfastly towards heaven, as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white ~~apparel~~, who said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

Dear children, every eye shall then behold him! Those who are dead will be raised up again when the last trumpet shall sound: those who are yet alive will be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, these frail bodies of sin and death will be changed into bodies which will be holy and pure, which can never die. Not only will those men of Galilee who stood gazing after him into heaven, see him come again; but you and I will have to stand before him in that awful day! Oh that we may be prepared to meet him! But, remember, if we hope to find in him a Friend and Saviour *then*, we must become his faithful followers *now*: if

we hope to share his crown then, we must gladly bear his cross now. We must daily seek to obey him, although it may be against our natural will and inclination; for he has said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." Unless we do this, we cannot be the disciples of him who pleased not himself, but gave himself up to suffer all things for our sakes.

Do not feel afraid to come to him, for his cross is easy and his burden light.

Dear children, if you have liked my little book, take your bibles, and turn to the Gospels, and there read again the things which I have told you. But before you do so, kneel down and pray, saying, "O God, give me thy Holy Spirit for Jesus Christ's sake." He has promised his Spirit to *all who ask for it*. Then your understandings will be opened, and you will find that "the scriptures are able to make you wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus." Read them daily, if you would obey Jesus, who has told us to "*search the scriptures*," for they tell us of him. They were written by holy men of old, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

You and I may never meet in this world, dear children; but we must stand together before the judgment-seat of Christ! Do you pray that the writer of this little book may then be one of the fold at his right hand. And I will "bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," that he would grant you to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God."

"May the peace of God which passeth all understanding keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus!"

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FINIS.











